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THE EXPOSITOR.

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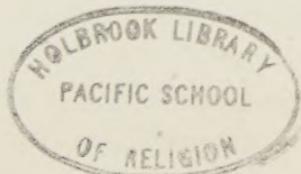
*S. H. Robinson*

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# THE EXPOSITOR.

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## *THE BOOK OF RUTH.*

### INTRODUCTION.

IN the whole gallery of Scripture portraits there are few which are more familiar to us, or more attractive, than the sweet figure of "Ruth standing amid the alien corn." Nor is it the least of her attractions to the Christian heart that the blood of Ruth ran in the veins of Jesus of Nazareth. In his genealogy of our Lord, St. Matthew inscribes the names of only four women,—Thamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba; and among these four, Ruth easily holds the pre-eminence. Thamar, Rahab, and Bathsheba were all women of dubious virtue even when judged by the standards of antiquity; but, judged by the moral standard of any age, Ruth is not only pure and sweet as the fields in which she gleaned, she rises to an heroic pitch of unselfish devotion and love. Strength veiled in gentleness, heroism enhanced yet also concealed by humility, is as truly the characteristic of Ruth as it is of the Son of Man. We may find her aptest emblem in those exquisite wild flowers which hide their perfect blooms under their broad green leaves, and only reveal their presence by the subtle fragrance they shed upon the air. Ruth

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is a true lily of the valley. It is not improbable, indeed, that her very name may be that of a flower, though not of the flower just mentioned. The common and accepted derivation of the Hebrew word *ruth* is “a friend;” and truly Ruth’s face is as the face of a friend to us: but a learned and ingenious scholar has conjectured, with much probability, that *ruth* is an ancient Hebrew form of the Greek *ρόδον*, the Latin *rosa*, the English *rose*, a word which denotes the *redness* of the flower; and, to say the least of it, it is very pleasant to think of Ruth as “*the Rose of Moab.*”

At what period the events narrated in this Book occurred we are not expressly told. All we are told is that it was “in the days when the Judges judged” (Chap. i. ver. 1). But as Israel was under the Judges for nearly five centuries—as long, let us say, as from the accession of the Plantagenet Henry V. to the present day—the phrase does not go far toward dating the Book. But another phrase in it (Chap. iv. vers. 21, 22), from which we learn that Boaz was the great grandfather of David, makes it pretty certain that the Judge, in whose days Ruth the alien was admitted to the Commonwealth of Israel, was the venerable but most unhappy Eli. Ruth’s son was Jesse’s father; Jesse was the father of David. It is very probable, therefore, that, when he was a child, Ruth may have fondled Jesse in her arms. “*The Rose of Moab*” is closely connected with “*the Darling of Israel.*”

We may be reasonably sure that the story of this Book was enacted while Eli was Judge in Israel; but when was it *written?* The question is not in

## THE BOOK OF RUTH.

itself of grave importance, perhaps ; but to find the answer to it is a good and wholesome exercise for younger students of Scripture. For all the materials of the answer are contained in the Book itself ; they need no scholarship to discover them : they are accessible to all. If, then, we read the Book of Ruth carefully, and with the purpose of fixing its date in our minds, surely the very opening words of the Story must arrest our attention : “Now it came to pass, *in the days when the Judges judged*, that there was a famine in the land.” Is that the tone of a man who is writing of the present, or of a past age ? Obviously it is the tone of one who speaks of the past. The Judges are no longer judging : the whole form of civil government has changed in the interval between the events narrated and the time at which the narrator writes. He is as evidently looking back as we should be were we to commence a story with the words, “Now it came to pass in the days when the Lord Protector sat on the throne of England.”

This is our first “note of time,” the first hint we get that a considerable interval must have elapsed between the time in which Ruth lived and the time in which the story of her life was told. As we read on we come on two other hints which confirm our conclusion. In Chap. iv. vers. 6-8 we are told of a curious legal custom. The next of kin to Naomi, when he refused to redeem her inheritance and to take Ruth to wife, drew off his shoe and gave it to Boaz, so transferring the right of redemption to him. And the historian pauses to explain that this was “*formerly*” the legal mode in Israel

"concerning redeeming, and concerning exchanging." But why should he stay to explain the custom if it had not fallen into disuse,—if it had not been so long disused that his readers had clean forgotten it? Yet old legal customs are very tenacious. They do not soon, or suddenly, become obsolete even with us, and, much less, in the unchanging East. And, therefore, we may infer that the story of Ruth was written, not only after her death, but long after it.

Verses 17, 21, and 22 of the same Chapter point to the same conclusion. For here we are told that Ruth had a son named Obed, Obed a son named Jesse, and Jesse a son named David. But how should David's name have been written before he was born? The Story—unless at least we have recourse to the clumsy expedient of supposing additions made to the original Scripture by a later hand—must have been composed, at the very earliest, after that great Prince was born: *i.e.*, it must have been written at least four generations—say, from a hundred and twenty to a hundred and fifty years—after the events it records.

To this extent, then, the Book dates itself. That it could not have been written *before* the time of David may be inferred from the fact that David's name is twice mentioned in it. That it was written *in* his time will become evident, I think, when we have caught the tone and purport of the Story.

Briefly told, that Story runs thus:—Under the pressure of a great famine, an ancient and honourable Hebrew family were threatened with want and misery. All that we are told of them indicates that they were Israelites indeed, devoutly attached to the land and

worship of their fathers. We may be sure, therefore, that it cost them many a pang to resolve to abandon their inheritance in the promised land and to seek bread among the idolators of Moab. They went farther than their neighbours, who were exposed to the same pressure, only to fare worse. In seeking a livelihood, they lost life. Three out of the four, Elimelech and his two sons, found a grave in the land in which they sought bread. Naomi is left alone, a childless widow. To all human appearance the family is blotted out from among the tribes of Israel. True, Naomi has her two daughters-in-law left; but these also are childless: and, moreover, they are strangers and aliens from the Hebrew Commonwealth, and of a race which had long been reckoned among the foes of the elect people. Naomi cannot endure to remain in the land which has proved so fatal to her affections and hopes. She returns to Bethlehem, but she returns "empty and afflicted," in great bitterness of soul, because the Lord has dealt very bitterly with her. Destitute and hopeless, she has but one comfort. Ruth remains with her, and will not be persuaded to leave her. She forsakes all—her country, her friends, her gods—that she may be true to her love for Naomi. But, like Naomi, she too comes to Bethlehem in poverty and sadness of heart.

When they arrive, although "the whole city is moved about them," no one offers them either succour or sympathy. Even the wealthy kinsmen of Elimelech,—one of whom, as we happen to know, was of a very noble and generous temper,—either because they are unaware of the calamities that had

overtaken Naomi, or because they had disapproved of Elimelech's sojourn among the heathen, stand aloof from her. Ruth is her sole stay. But Ruth is willing to work, and even to beg, for her. At the time of harvest she goes into the fields to glean after the reapers. A kindly providence leads her to the fields of Boaz, the wealthiest, though not the nearest, kinsman of Elimelech. Here her virtue and piety become known. Boaz honours her both for her unselfish devotion to Naomi, and because she, a heathen, has come "to trust herself under the wings of the God of Israel." For Ruth's sake, Naomi is restored to the goodwill of her kinsmen. By her modesty, her unselfishness, her pious reverence for Jehovah, the Moabitish woman conquers the Hebrew prejudice against the alien and the stranger. By these same virtues she wins the heart of Boaz and the rights of a wife and a mother in Israel. At every turn of the Story we are made to feel that the Gentile Ruth is its heroine, and that she is its heroine simply because, in virtue and in piety, she excels even the Hebrew women. Yet she is no "saint," no devotee, no prophetess, but a very woman, and a woman

"Not too bright and good  
For human nature's daily food."

Wide as is the gulf of time and social habit by which we are separated from her, nevertheless we feel that she is such a woman as would even now be the crown and charm of any household.

And it surely speaks well for those ancient Jews of whom we are apt to think, not altogether without reason, as the most jealous and exclusive of men, that they should have so frankly recognized the

worth and charm of a daughter of Moab ; that they should not only have preserved the tradition of her extraordinary sweetness and nobility, but should also have written it down and have included the writing in their most sacred Scriptures.

The Story, moreover, is written in no hostile or grudging spirit. The figure of the Gentile is not placed in the shade of the background, but in the centre and full light of the narrative. The Book is not called, as with some show of reason it might have been called when gathered into the Hebrew annals, "the Book of Naomi," or, "the Book of Boaz," or, "the Descent of David," but "the Book of Ruth." She is placed in the foreground, and kept in it throughout.

No doubt the Story is a love story, and is designed to set forth the power of love to overcome all the alienations, hostilities, and prejudices of nature and of that second nature which we call "habit." But it is not a story of romantic love between a young man and a young woman. It is the story of a woman's love for a woman ; and, strangely as it would sound in the ears of our modern wits, it is the story of a young wife's passionate and devoted love for her mother-in-law ! Ruth's tender self-sacrificing affection for Naomi is the very charm of the Story. It is in the strength of love that she abandons Moab and her father's house ; it is in the strength of love that she also conquers the prejudices and jealousies of Bethlehem, and compels even Hebrews to admire her virtue and record her fame. And in that it was by her love for Naomi that Ruth was brought to know and serve the only wise and

true God, we may see an illustration of the fact that men and women are often led to religion by natural affection, and rise to the love of God through their love for one another. The Story, then, is a story in praise of charity ; and it *shews* the charity it praises. We have no reason to doubt that it was written by a Hebrew ; obviously it is one of the Hebrew Scriptures : and yet it contains no touch of the common Hebrew enmity against the Gentile. It is fair, and even generous, in the tone it takes toward those who were outside the Hebrew pale. It has no word of blame for Elimelech, although he left the land of his fathers to sojourn among the heathen ; nor for Orpah, although she turned back from Naomi: on the contrary, it records her kindness and self-devotion in at least intending to remain with her "mother" till Naomi herself dissuaded her ; while for Ruth it has no praise too high. It bases itself on the truth, which Christ has made the common property of the race, that in every nation a pure and unselfish love is acceptable to God. So far from asserting the exclusive privilege of the chosen people, it rather invites other races to come and put their trust under the wings of Jehovah, by shewing that, so soon as they trust in Him, the privilege and blessing of Israel become theirs.

Now it is this singular charity for the outside world, this disposition to do justice and to shew kindness to the Gentiles, which most of all renders it probable that the Story of Ruth was rescued from the stammering and uncertain lips of Tradition and fairly written out in the reign of David. For nothing is more characteristic of David and his time,

though it is a characteristic too commonly overlooked, than the fair and easy terms on which he met all foreigners, all men of alien races, and the rare fidelity with which these aliens clave to his cause, even when it was a losing cause. It is very strange, and very instructive when we think of it, that David, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, the flower and darling of his race, should have been wholly free from the Hebrew prejudice against men of heathen races,—that he should have called so many of them to his service, placed them close to his person, had them constantly about him, and have inspired them with so profound an attachment that they willingly laid down their lives for him. For from the very first, from his encounter with the Giant of Gath onward, he displayed a faith in the religious convictions peculiar to Israel which never wavered, which, if equalled, was never surpassed. And yet no prince of Israel was ever on such friendly intimate terms with the heathen about him. He fearlessly commits his father and mother to the care of the King of Moab.<sup>1</sup> He gratefully records the kindness shewn him by the King of Ammon.<sup>2</sup> When he took refuge in the cave, or hold, of Adullam from the vindictive hatred of Saul, his body-guard was formed of brave men of foreign origin, who afterward became the captains of his army.<sup>3</sup> He tarried long in the city of Gath, and held the goodwill of the king, although he had slain its gigantic champion; and so won the hearts of many of the Gittites that six hundred of them followed him throughout his chequered career, and

<sup>1</sup> 1 Samuel xxii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Samuel x. 2.

<sup>3</sup> The *Cherethites* and the *Pelethites* of 2 Samuel viii. 18.

were faithful to him even when Hebrew statesmen and soldiers deserted him.<sup>1</sup> He had no more loyal soldier in his host than Uriah the *Hittite*. When his son Absalom revolted from him, almost the only men who remained true to him were his foreign servants and captains. It was an *Ammonite* who supplied him with provisions for his hasty flight.<sup>2</sup> It was a *Phœnician* who went back to the camp of Absalom that he might serve David by thwarting the intrigues of Ahithophel.<sup>3</sup> The spirit of utter loyalty and devotion by which these gallant men were animated received, perhaps, its finest illustration in the interview of David with Ittai, a *man of Gath*.<sup>4</sup> When the treasonable designs of Absalom broke out, Ittai had but recently taken service with David. And therefore the King, generous and considerate even in his darkest hour of distress, says to him : “Wherefore goest thou with us ? Return to thy place, and abide with the king, for thou art a stranger. If thou art banished, go to thy native land. Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I to-day make thee go up and down with us; seeing I go whither I may ? Return thou, and take back thy brethren. Mercy and truth be with thee.” “Nay,” replied the brave loyal stranger, “as Jehovah liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, in what place the lord my king shall be, whether in death or in life, even there will thy servant be also.”

One hardly knows which the more to admire, the man who could inspire a loyalty so pure and

<sup>1</sup> 1 Samuel xxvii., xxviii. 1, 2 ; xxix. ; and 2 Samuel xv. 18.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Samuel xvii. 27-29.      <sup>3</sup> 2 Samuel xv. 32-37.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Samuel xv. 19-22.

devoted, or the men who were capable of feeling it. But one thing is quite certain, viz., that in no other period of Jewish history do such friendly and cordial relations between Jew and Gentile come to view. And, therefore, we may well believe—what all the other indications of time in this Scripture suggest—that it was at this period that the Book of Ruth, which commemorates the fidelity and love of a Gentile, and that Gentile an ancestress of David, was written. It breathes the tone of David's life and time—the tone of a time in which all who feared God and wrought righteousness were held in honour, whether they were of Hebrew or of Heathen blood.

Some wonder has been expressed by commentators and divines that the Book of Ruth should have been included in the Sacred Canon; that a love story, charming and idyllic as it is, should have found a place among the Scriptures of the Prophets. But, though we have a strange and irrational trick of smiling a little contemptuously, or a little ironically, when so much as the name of “love” is mentioned, yet no man who reflects on how great a part love plays in human life, and how much the sweetness and dignity of human life depend upon it, and how closely the love of our neighbour is connected with the love of God, will much marvel that God should have moved a holy man to record the love of Ruth for Naomi, or even the love of Boaz for Ruth, and so to set us “a pattern how we ought to live.” The place of Ruth in Holy Writ needs no other vindication than this,—that, in her, love grew to heroism. But if it did, an ample vindication might be found in the facts that this Book shews us that every pure

and unselfish affection leads to God, and is acceptable to Him ; that it reveals Him to us as no less pleased by the goodness of a Heathen than by that of a Hebrew : and that it also shews us that, in their better moods, the very Jews knew that there was no respect of persons with Him.

## TRANSLATION.

CHAPTER I.—*Now it came to pass in the days when the Judges judged, that there was a famine in the land. And a man of Bethlehem-judah went to sojourn in the Field of Moab, he, and his wife, and his sons. (2.) And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites of Bethlehem-judah. And they came into the Field of Moab and abode there.*

*(3.) And Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. (4.) And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelt there about ten years. (5.) Then, died these two also, Mahlon and Chilion; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.*

*(6.) Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, and returned from the Field of Moab; for she had heard in the Field of Moab that the Lord had remembered his people to give them bread. (7.) And she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. (8.) Then said Naomi to her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each to her mother's house. The Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. (9.) The Lord grant you that ye may find an asylum, each in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept. (10.) And they said unto her, Nay, but we will return with thee unto thy people. (11.) And Naomi said, Return my daughters: why will ye go with me? Are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? (12.) Return, my daughters, go; for I am too old to have a husband. Even if I should say, I have hope; if even to-night I should have a husband, and should also bear sons; (13.) would ye tarry till they were grown? would ye, for them, shut yourselves up from having husbands? Nay, my daugh-*

ters. Yet is it much more bitter for me than for you, since the hand of the Lord is gone out against me. (14.) And they lifted up their voice and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law ; but Ruth clave unto her. (15.) And she (Naomi) said, Behold, thy sister-in-law has gone back unto her people, and unto her gods ; return thou also after thy sister-in-law. (16.) And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, nor to return from following after thee ; for whither thou goest, I will go ; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge : thy people is my people, and thy God my God : (17.) where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me. (18.) So when she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she ceased to dissuade her.

(19.) So they two went on till they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, This Naomi ! (20.) And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara, for the Lord hath dealt very bitterly with me. (21.) I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty. Why, then, call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me. (22.) So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, who returned out of the Field of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley-harvest.

CHAPTER II.—And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a valiant hero, of the family of Elimelech ; and his name was Boaz. (2.) And Ruth, the Moabitess, said unto Naomi, Let me now go into the fields, and glean among the ears after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter. (3.) And she went, and came, and gleaned in a field after the reapers. And her lot met her in the field of Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech. (4.) And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee. (5.) Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this ? (6.) And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, She is a Moabitish damsel who came back with Naomi out of the Field of Moab ; (7.) and she said, I pray thee let me glean, and I will gather after the reapers among the sheaves : so she came and hath continued (at work) even from the morning until now, save that she rested a little in the house. (8.) Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my

daughier? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: (9.) let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou (fearlessly) after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not molest thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels and drink of that which the young men have drawn. (10.) Then she bent her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take note of me, seeing I am a stranger? (11.) And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath been fully shewn me all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband, and that thou hast left thy father and thy mother and the land of thy nativity, and art come among a people whom thou knewest not heretofore. (12.) The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to take refuge. (13.) Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord, for thou hast comforted me, and hast spoken to the heart of thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thy handmaidens. (14.) And Boaz said unto her at meal-time, Come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers; and he reached her parched corn,<sup>1</sup> and she did eat and was satisfied, and left (of that she ate). (15.) And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded the young men, saying, Let her glean even between the sheaves, and shame her not; (16.) and pull out some (ears) from the armfuls on purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not. (17.) So she gleaned in the fields until evening, and beat out that she had gleaned; and it was about an ephah of barley.

<sup>1</sup> Verse 14.—The parched corn which Boaz handed to Ruth is prepared thus: a few handfuls of the best ears are plucked and tied into small bundles. Then a quick fire of dried grass and thorn bushes is kindled, and the corn is held in the blaze till the chaff is mostly burned off. The grain is then sufficiently roasted to be rubbed out and eaten, and is a well-liked food throughout the East. The servants of a traveller do not scruple to help themselves and him to sufficient corn from any field they pass; nor is it thought wrong for them to help themselves to as much as they require.

“The morsel” which Ruth dipped in “vinegar,” i.e., a mixture of vinegar and oil and water, was, no doubt, a piece of biscuit bread. And travellers in the East report that it is quite incredible how the biscuit, eaten with vinegar and oil, recruits the weary and exhausted frame.

(18.) And she took it up, and came into the city ; and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. And she brought out and gave to her that which she had left (at meal-time) after she was satisfied. (19.) And her mother-in-law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to-day ? and where hast thou worked ? Blessed be he that did take notice of thee. And she shewed her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, The man's name with whom I worked to-day is Boaz. (20.) And Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law, Blessed be he of the Lord who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is akin to us, one of our goelim. (21.) And Ruth the Moabitess said, Moreover he said unto me, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men until they have ended all my harvest. (22.) And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter-in-law, Good, my daughter ; go out only with his maidens, lest in any other field thou be molested. (23.) So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz, gleaning to the end of the barley-harvest and of the wheat-harvest ; and then she abode with her mother-in-law.

CHAPTER III.—Then Naomi, her mother-in-law, said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek an asylum for thee, that it may be well with thee ? (2.) And, now, is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast ? Behold, he winnoweth barley to-night in the threshing-floor. (3.) Wash thyself, therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy (best) apparel upon thee, and get thee down to the floor, but let not thyself be seen until the man have done eating and drinking. (4.) And it shall be that when he lieth down, thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in and uncover (the place at) his feet, and lay thee down : and he will tell thee what thou shalt do. (5.) And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do. (6.) And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother-in-law bade her.

(7.) And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn ; and she came softly, and uncovered (the place at) his feet, and laid her down. (8.) And it came to pass, at midnight, that the man was startled, and bent himself over ; and, behold, a woman lay at his feet. (9.) And he said, Who art thou ? And she answered, I am Ruth, thine handmaid : spread therefore thy wings over thine handmaid ; for thou art a goel. (10.) And he said, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter : for thy latter kindness is better than thy former, inasmuch as thou didst not go after young men, whether poor

or rich. (11.) And, now, my daughter, fear not ; I will do for thee all that thou askest : for all the gate of my people doth know that thou art a brave woman.<sup>1</sup> (12.) And, now, truly indeed I am a goel ; howbeit there is a goel nearer than I. (13.) Tarry here to-night, and it shall be, in the morning, that if he will redeem thee, well ; let him redeem : but if he will not redeem thee, then, as the Lord liveth, I will redeem thee. Lie down until the morning. (14.) And she lay at his feet till the morning : and she rose up before a man could recognize his friend. For he said, Let it not be known that the woman came into the floor. (15.) Also he said, Bring hither thy shawl that thou hast upon thee, and hold it out. And when she held it out, he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her. And she went into the city.

(16.) And when she came to her mother-in-law, she (Naomi) said, How comest thou, my daughter ? And she told her all that the man had done unto her. (17.) And she said, These six measures of barley gave he me ; for he said to me, Go not empty to thy mother-in-law. (18.) And she (Naomi) said, Stay at home, my daughter, until thou knowest how the matter will go ; for the man will not rest until he have finished it this day.

CHAPTER IV.—And Boaz went up to the gate, and sat him down there : and, behold, the goel of whom Boaz spake passed by ; unto whom he said, Ho, So-and-So, turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down. (2.) And he (Boaz) took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down. (3.) And he said unto the goel : Naomi, who is come again out of the Field of Moab, sold the parcel of land which was our brother Elimlech's ; (4.) and I determined to advertise thee of it, and say, Acquire it before those who sit (in the gate) and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it ; but if thou wilt not redeem it, tell me, that I may know : for there is none to redeem it but thou, and I, who am next to thee. And he said, I will redeem it. (5.) Then said Boaz, What day thou acquirest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou acquirest it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. (6.) And the goel said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance ; redeem thou for thyself that which it is mine to redeem, for I cannot redeem it. (7.) Now this was the custom formerly in Israel in cases of redeeming and in cases of exchanging,

<sup>1</sup> Literally, “*a woman of strength*,” i.e., a woman both brave and good.

in order that at all points they might be confirmed: A mat, plucked off his shoe and gave it to his neighbour: and this was attestation<sup>1</sup> in Israel. (8.) When, then, the goel said unto Boaz, Do thou acquire it, he drew off his shoe. (9.) And Boaz said unto the elders and all the people, Ye are witnesses this day that I have acquired all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. (10.) Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I acquired to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place. Ye are witnesses this day. (11.) And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that cometh into thy house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel; and mayest thou grow strong in Ephrathah and win a name in Bethlehem: (12.) and may thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bore unto Judah, of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman.

(13.) So Beaz took Ruth, and she became his wife; and he went in unto her, and the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son. (14.) And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the Lord, who hath not left thee this day without a goel, and may his name be famous in Israel: (15.) and may he be a restorer of thy soul, and the stay of thine old age; for thy daughter-in-law, who loveth thee, who is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him. (16.) And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it. (17.) And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

(18.) Now these are the generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Hezron, (19.) and Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Aminadab, (20.) and Aminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon, (21.) and Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed, (22.) and Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.

<sup>1</sup> Attestation, i.e., the legal form of attestator.

*THE HUMAN ELEMENT IN THE GOSPELS.**(Concluded from vol. i. p. 470.)*

So is it in the Gospels. St. Matthew (Chapter xvii.) gives an account of that scene in Capernaum when Peter is asked, “Doth not your Master pay tribute?” and then he tells of the miracle of the fish with the stater in its mouth. But this incident is not referred to by any of the other three Evangelists : why, then, is Matthew so particular and so precise ? We can easily understand. Matthew himself had been a collector of dues, and, possibly, he himself had asked at his receipt of custom the very question propounded to Peter. It is just such an incident as would fasten itself upon the mind of the quondam tax-gatherer, waking up the memories and associations of his earlier life. So in that other narrative where the Herodians seek to entrap Jesus by the question of paying tribute. In St. Mark and St. Luke, Christ says, “Shew me a penny ;” but Matthew flies at once to the language of the custom-house, “Shew me *the tribute-money.*” Mark and Luke give the common popular name, the “*denarius;*” but in the custom-house it is something more than a silver denarius : it is “*τὸ νόμισμα τῶν κῆνσον.*” It is the language of officialism, stilted and grand, and we can almost see the publican Jew levying his blackmail upon his countrymen — asking for their gold, that Cæsar’s mint may turn it into fetters, and screwing up his courage to the task by saying to himself, “It is *τὸ νόμισμα*”—established by law. It is a shred of Roman red-tape, that clothed the government officer

with a show of brief authority, and Matthew's pen catches instinctively this echo from the custom-house. So, too, in the statement about Judas and the betrayal. Mark and Luke simply say, "They covenanted to give him money;" but Matthew, whose training in a government-office has taught him exactness in financial matters, tells us how much the price was, and weighs out to us the thirty pieces of blood-money.

About the life of St. Mark we know comparatively little; but this is immaterial, as it is generally admitted that St. Mark acted as a kind of amanuensis to the Apostle Peter. It is then Peter's voice we may expect to hear, as, Rhoda-like, we listen by the gate of our second Gospel. Quick, impetuous, and impulsive, St. Peter was ready for any emergency. If he had possessed our modern weakness for heraldic symbols, what motto for his crest had been so suitable as that one word *εὐθεῶς*—"Straightway"? It is the watchword of St. Mark's Gospel, occurring more frequently there than in the three other Gospels together. And what could be more characteristic of the man, so swift of speech and prompt in deed? There is one word occurring in this Gospel, and found also in the Gospel of St. John, which Matthew and Luke do not use—the word *πλοιάριον*, "a little ship." Matthew and Luke, the two landsmen, use only the generic *πλόιον*; but Peter and John, the two oarsmen, make a distinction in name, as there doubtless was a difference in the build, and six times use the diminutive *πλοιάριον* (Mark iii. 9; iv. 36, *et al.*).

St. Mark, speaking of the woman with the issue, says, "She had suffered many things of many phy-

sicians." There is a certain amount of harshness about this expression, as if these physicians were heartless empirics who stopped at no torture if they could only carry on their experiments. But when St. Luke tells the story, he tempers down this severity. He puts a veil over the sufferings caused by unskilful hands, and simply says, "She had spent all her living upon physicians." It is Luke, the "beloved physician," who now writes; and we only give him credit for what is perfectly natural when we admit that his statement of the selfsame fact is toned by a keen sense of professional honour. A medical man, by the demands of his calling, is brought especially into contact with the feminine nature. He knows, as none other does, the burdens, pains, and anguish of maternity, and, as a matter of course, his sympathies are quickened toward woman-kind. And how this element pervades St. Luke's Gospel! Likening these four books to the surroundings of the Temple, St. Luke's Gospel is the "Court of the Women." He alone tells us of the meeting of Elisabeth and Mary up in the hill-country, and of the babe leaping in the womb. He alone gives us that sublime song which the Church will never let die—the *Magnificat*—which is the out-gushing of a maternal heart. He alone tells us of the woman who has lost her piece of silver. It is his hand which draws for us that picture of the two sisters at Bethany—love in action and love in rest. He alone records the names of Susanna and Joanna, who followed Christ and ministered to Him of their substance. He alone tells us of that widow whom the unjust judge was slow to avenge, and of the

"women" following Jesus to the cross. It is all through the heart of a "physician beloved."

So, too, in the Fourth Gospel. It is very probable that St. John spent part of his life in Jerusalem, and from the fact of his being acquainted with the high-priest (John xviii. 15), we might conjecture that he had some function in the service of the Temple. Recent writers have been trying to prove, from the frequent references to the Temple in the Revelation, that John not only might, but that he must, have had some acquaintance with its routine and ritual ; that none but one who was personally familiar with the Temple service, and who himself had been behind the scenes, could have written the Book of the Revelation. Let this be granted, and what a flood of light does it pour upon this Fourth Gospel ! It is the Christ of Judæa it portrays, as the others tell of the Christ of Galilee. You can put nearly the whole book within a ten-mile circle, taking Jerusalem as its centre. No longer do we see the flocks of birds darting round Gennesaret, no longer the lilies and the grass of Galilee ; but we have instead the "vines" of the terraced mountain-side, and the "folds" of Olivet, where the "good shepherd" has safely housed his flocks. It is John who marks his calendar by the old Jewish feasts, threading ecclesiastical phrases all through his narrative. Witness the following : "At the feast;" "midst of the feast;" "the last, the great day of the feast;" the "feast of dedication;" the "feast of tabernacles;" "the Jews' passover was nigh at hand;" "buy those things we have need of against the feast;" these are all expressions peculiar to this Gospel. It is St. John

who tells us of the raising to life of Lazarus, and of the cure of the blind man in Jerusalem. It is he who tells us how Jesus "sat over against the treasury ;" and he alone records that Temple-scene (if, indeed, the record be part of his Gospel)—how Jesus took the part of the woman whom the Pharisees were accusing (viii. 1-11). It is John who tells how Jesus was led before the council of priests, and how some of the "chief rulers" believed on Jesus. It is John who tells us of the "pool of Siloam ;" of the "brook Cedron ;" that Gethsemane was "a garden." He speaks of "the pavement ;" of "Golgotha ;" of Joseph's garden, and of his "new sepulchre"—all of which the other Evangelists omit. The others speak of a "great multitude" coming to take Jesus ; but John, perhaps recognizing familiar faces, tells us it was not a disorganized rabble, but an organized band, under the command of "officers" and a "captain." St. Mark, speaking of the sword-stroke of the lusty Peter, tells us how he "smote a servant of the high-priest ;" but St. John, who has a more intimate acquaintance with the household of the high-priest, tells us "the servant's name was Malchus."

While then it is one life that the Evangelists describe, or, rather, parts of one life, we see that Divine life through a human medium. If one records events omitted by others, if at times the same fact be expressed in somewhat different forms, it is only what we have a reason and a right to expect. The Divine Spirit might, and did guide them ; but He made use of their several idiosyncrasies, calling into play those laws of association, affinity, and taste that are a part of our constitution.

(2) But the human element appears in the Gospels—as in fact it does in all Scripture—in a second form: *they are written after the manner of human speech.* While we are not afraid of subjecting the Bible to the very same rules of criticism we apply to any other writings, still we claim for the Scriptures the same privileges, the same latitude of language, that we allow to them. Without claiming for these Gospels a *verbal* inspiration, we may claim for them a *plenary* inspiration, *i.e.*, an inspiration more comprehensive and as complete. Though in our translations we have lost the *ipsissima verba*, yet we have the same truths those words embodied. What are words at best but an imperfect vehicle for thought, and oftentimes a drapery with which to conceal thought? Words change in their meaning, they grow old, they die; but thought does not change, thought does not die. When man was formed in Eden there was a twofold process—a creation and an inspiration; the body was made, the soul was in-breathed. So language is but an outward covering for the thought-soul; and may we not in these Gospels have the double process repeated—the thought inspired, and then the language left for the mind of the Evangelist to weave according to his own pattern? Thus, underneath these discrepancies of statement we shall find a harmony of sentiment; and when these veils of language are turned aside we shall recognize the face of the Thought we have seen elsewhere. For instance: according to St. Matthew Christ says that “two sparrows are sold for one farthing;” but according to St. Luke He says that “five sparrows are sold for two farthings.” But

let us get behind this drapery of sparrows and farthings, and we shall find the same *truth*—that these birds are very insignificant creatures,<sup>1</sup> and then this truth becomes part of the premise of the after syllogism which proves the Providence of God. Or we may take another illustration from the narrative which records the raising of Jairus's daughter. St. Luke tells us that when the ruler came and knelt at Jesus's feet his only daughter "lay a-dying;" St. Mark represents him as beseeching Christ greatly and saying, "My little daughter lieth at the point of death;" while, according to St. Matthew, he says, "My daughter is even now dead." Now at first sight these statements appear irreconcilable; but if we look through the mere phraseology we shall find an exact harmony of thought. It is simply a difference of tense; in one, the action or state is present; in the other, past. We find in the Greek language a remarkable vivacity, and such an interchanging of tenses as our English would not allow. Does a writer want to bring a past event vividly to the mind—making it more real, more impressive? he brings it out of the past, and instead of the aorist he uses the historical present. We have an example (John ix. 13) where they *bring* the blind man to the Pharisees (*ἀγονσιν αὐτὸν*); and again (Mark v. 15), when those who fed the swine *come* (*ἐρχονται*) to Jesus. So, too, if a writer wishes to represent an action with an expression of energy, decision, or completeness, he remits it back into the past and

<sup>1</sup> Yet we should also note that by accepting both statements we get a significant hint that the Providence of God extends even to creatures the most insignificant, embracing even the odd bird thrown into the bargain.

uses the aorist for the present; while a future action, in view of its nearness or certainty, may be conceived of as now doing, or as already done, and may be expressed by the present, aorist, or perfect. Let us apply these rules to that statement of St. Matthew, " My daughter is even now dead" (*ἀπτι επελεύθησεν*). That is, the event is so near and so certain, that in the mind of the writer it has already happened; there is no chance of recovery, no room for hope. We have in our idiomatic English a phrase exactly analogous—"it is all over with him;" a phrase which, perhaps, would not bear a strict analysis, but which is most expressive, stamping at once the certainty of the event. Now suppose two persons are watching by the couch as the dying man lies in an unconscious stupor and gasps for breath. One of them says, "The man is surely dying;" and the other answers, "Yes, it is all over with him;" the two expressions would vary, but the underlying thought would be exactly the same. So let the Gospels be interpreted in the light of common sense; let us test them by the same rules of criticism we apply to other writings, and many of the so-called difficulties will vanish.

(3) There is a third mode in which the human element appears in the Gospels; and that is, the *different aim that prompted and guided the Evangelists in their task*. They do not take up the work in a chance casual way; they do not throw the incidents into their story at random, making a shapeless conglomerate; but each seems to have his well-defined purpose—his line of thought; and round this line of thought the incidents crystallize into beautiful and

symmetrical shapes. They do not portray four Christs, but one Christ in four aspects ; and as each views Him from the standpoint of his own design, he draws his lines of perspective accordingly. Whether there is any connection between the vision of Ezekiel and these Gospels we do not pretend to say. It may be only a fancy—and it may be something more—that recognizes in these four pictures the face of a lion, the face of an ox, the face of an eagle, and the face of a man ; but if it be a fancy, it is a pleasant one, and not altogether profitless. St. Matthew shews us the face of the *lion*—Christ the King. His book links the Old with the New Testament. He holds up the lamp of prophecy, and flings its light full upon Christ the Messiah. He calls his book “the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David ;” and while St. Luke tells us of the visit of the poor shepherds, who, since they have no other treasures to offer, open their hearts and lips, and pour out the spices of their gladness and their songs ; St. Matthew shews us the stately Magi, asking, “Where is he that is born king of the Jews ?” and their right-royal gifts—“gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.” In St. Mark we see the face of the patient *ox*. It is Christ the Servant ; going about doing good ; bearing man’s burdens ; walking up and down the furrows of common life, carrying a yoke that is self-imposed ; servant of all, whether bound to the plough or bound to the altar. In St. Luke we see the face of a *man*. It is Christ on the human side, and so this Gospel enters minutely into the circumstances of the birth ; it tells us of that per-

fect childhood and youth; it shews us the boy Jesus making the Rabbis of the Temple marvel. It is in this Gospel we find expressions like these: "and the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom;" "and when he was twelve years old;" "and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature;" "and Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age;" "he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up." It is all through the gospel of the humanity. In St. John we see the face of the *eagle*—Christ the God. Instead of tracing his genealogy up to David, Abraham, and Adam, St. John goes infinitely higher. "The Word was with God, and *the Word was God.*" That sentence is the keynote, running through the whole of this Fourth Gospel, and giving to its music such sublimity and grandeur. It is the Gospel of the discourses, the teacher not issuing from the porch of a Zeno, but coming down "from above." It is Christ the Messiah—the God.

Taking into account these and other forms in which the human element appears in the Gospels, one by one the apparent difficulties and differences vanish. More than other lives, these come stamped with authority—bearing the hall-mark of Heaven. Simple stories they are, and yet for eighteen centuries they have charmed the world, lifting up men and nations into a better holier life. And why do they thus live? live in spite of scoff and sarcasm; in spite of the deadliest assaults and the keenest criticism? Because there is a living Christ in them. He is their Alpha and their Omega, their beginning and end. The mind that is darkened by sin may

not discover Him; he whose mind is dulled by prejudice and pride may see nothing but “men, as trees, walking;” but he whose eyes are opened by the Spirit’s touch, will see Jesus the Christ, clothed in a seamless robe that is woven from the top throughout. Man will step aside, and the Evangelists vanishing, like Moses and Elias in the overshadowing cloud, nothing will be seen “save Jesus only”—the perfect Man, the perfect God.

HENRY BURTON.

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*THE EPISTLES TO  
THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.*

INTRODUCTORY.

I DO not purpose entering on a discussion of the authorship or date of the Revelation which claims to have been written by John the Divine ( $\circ\theta\epsilon\omega\lambda\circ\gamma\circ\sigma$ ). I accept the all but unanimous tradition of the writers of the ante-Nicene Church that it was the work of the beloved disciple, partly because the tradition in this case is sufficiently early to have something of an historical value (I refer especially to the Muratorian Fragment), partly on account of the internal coincidences of thought and language, on which I have dwelt elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> I hold, with not a few recent commentators, that it belongs to a date earlier than that of the persecution under Domitian, to which Patristic tradition for the most part assigned it; that it was written certainly before the destruction of Jerusalem, probably during a time in which the Asiatic Churches were suffering from the persecution of which we have traces as affect-

<sup>1</sup> “Bible Educator,” i. pp. 27, 57.

ing that portion of the Empire in the Pastoral Epistles (2 Tim. i. 8, 15; ii. 3; iii. 12), yet more definitely in the First Epistle of St. Peter (i. 6, 7; ii. 12; iii. 14-17; iv. 1, 12-19), and in that Epistle to the Hebrews which I have been led to assign to the same period.<sup>1</sup> The Neronian persecution was obviously more than the effect of the cruelty or policy of an individual tyrant. It was only possible through the excitement, the suspicion, the hatred, which pervaded men's minds in the imperial city as they found themselves face to face with the power and life of the new society that bore the name of Christian; and that hatred and suspicion were as certain to be felt in every city of the Empire as in Rome itself.

About this period, then, probably shortly after the death of Nero (say *circ.* A.D. 68 or 69), John, who speaks of himself, as Paul (Phil. i. 1) and Peter (2 Pet. i. 1) and James (James i. 1) had done before him, as the servant ( $\delta\sigma\mu\lambda\oslash$ ) of Jesus Christ, dropping the name of apostle where there was no pressing necessity to assert his authority as such, wrote the book to which he prefixed the title of Revelation. Exceptional as that title now is among the Books of the New Testament, we must remember that neither the word nor the thing were exceptional in the Apostolic age. It was by "visions and revelations of the Lord" that each Apostle was carried forward from truth to truth and received fresh insight into the work he had to do. In this way Stephen had seen the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God

<sup>1</sup> See papers in THE EXPOSITOR on "The Life and Writings of Apollos," vol. i. pp. 329-348, 409-435.

(Acts vii. 55, 56), and Peter had been taught that the gate of Eternal Life had been thrown open to the Gentiles (Acts x. 11), and Paul had been carried up to the third heaven and the Paradise of God (2 Cor. xii. 1-4, 7), and had from time to time beheld the form of the risen and ascended Christ (Acts xxii. 17, 18 ; xxviii. 9), or of some angel sent by Him (Acts xvii. 23). In this way prophets and apostles had been taught what before eye had not seen nor ear heard, neither had it entered into the heart of man to conceive (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10). Each mystery of the faith was imparted by a new revelation. An apocalypse extending to the far future, to the coming of the Lord, to the signs of its approach, is implied as given to St. Paul in 2 Thess. ii. 1-12 ; in 1 Tim. iv. 1-3 ; and to St. Peter in 2 Pet. ii. 10-13. It would hardly be a paradox to say that a state commonly so abnormal as that of trance or ecstasy was part of the normal life of the Apostles of the Faith. John, when he addressed his Revelation to the Churches of Asia was claiming no exceptional privilege. They would not be startled by it as by something altogether extraordinary.

The writer describes himself further as one " who bare record" (*εμαρτύρησε*) "of the Word of God and of the testimony" (*μαρτυρία*) "of Jesus, and of all things which He saw" (i. 2). I cannot bring myself to confine the application of these words to the contents of the Book to which they are thus prefixed. The Apostle had, for some greater or less length of time, been working and preaching in these Asiatic Churches, and describes himself as having done a work which they would recognize as truly his. If

we accept the Fourth Gospel as either being by St. John, or as, at least, representing the characteristic features of his teaching, we note that the idea of witness, record, testimony, is throughout the keynote of that teaching. When the spear pierced the side of Jesus, "he that saw it bare record, and his record is true" (John xix. 35). He closed his Gospel with the declaration, "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things and wrote these things" (John xxi. 24). I do not, of course, assume that the Gospel was written before the Revelation, but I infer from the prominence given to the word *μαρτυρία* and its cognates alike in Gospel, Revelation, and Epistles, that it had all along been characteristic of his oral teaching, and that that teaching is referred to here. And, assuming this, I cannot hesitate to see in "the Word of God" to which he bore witness more than the spoken Message of the Gospel. He who beheld in Christ the "Word made flesh," who, even in the earlier stage of thought to which the Apocalypse belongs, saw Him who was faithful and true, on whose head were many crowns, who was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and whose name was called THE WORD OF GOD (Rev. xix. 11-13), was not likely in his opening words to use that name in any lower sense than when he wrote afterwards that, "In the beginning was the Word" (John i. 1), or that the "Word of Life" was that which he had seen with his eyes, and had looked upon, and his hands had handled (1 John i. 1).

And he writes to the Seven Churches of Asia. What chain of events brought the Apostle to that region we know not. The silence of Scripture is

nowhere more remarkable than in connection with the period of his life from the time of the Council at Jerusalem to that in which we find him as an exile in Patmos. All that we can say is that it is probable that the sacred charge of watching over the Virgin Mother kept him for several years in comparative seclusion, and that he appears to have left Jerusalem before St. Paul's last visit there, and not to have arrived at Ephesus when the last extant Epistle of that Apostle was written to Timotheus. We can, however, form a fairly full picture of the state of things which he found on his arrival, and which probably had drawn him thither that he might fill up the gap that had been left by the departure or the death of the two great Teachers to whom these Churches had till then looked for guidance. A time of fiery persecution, of fierce outrage, and foul calumnies; a time also of sects and schisms, evil men and seducers waxing worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived; the polity and discipline of the Church thrown into confusion; the teaching of St. Paul forgotten, or, worse still, exaggerated and distorted; the very teachers and bishops of the Church becoming the leaders of sects and schisms,—this is what we find portrayed in the writings which must have preceded his arrival (on the hypothesis which I have adopted as to the date of the Apocalypse) but a few short years or months. And the storm of persecution falls on him also, and he finds himself at Patmos. The tone in which he speaks of himself as being there “for the sake of the Word of God” (I do not abandon the higher sense even here) “and of the testimony of Jesus Christ” (i. 9) suggests the thought that he had been banished

there by some judicial sentence. Rejecting, as unsupported by any adequate evidence, the tradition that that sentence came from the mouth of Domitian, or of any other Roman emperor, I fall back upon an assumption which was in the nature of the case far more probable, *i. e.*, that he had been condemned by some local authority, most probably by the Pro-consul of Asia, who had his seat at Ephesus ; and I find in the comparative leniency of the sentence as a substitute for that of death, which fell on so many believers elsewhere, even in the Asiatic Churches, a token of the continued influence of those who, like the Asiarchs that were friends of Paul, and the town-clerk of Ephesus, were so far favourable to the Christian society as to be unwilling to join in violent measures for its extirpation. (Acts xix. 31, 37.) There is no proof, so far as I know, that Patmos was at this period one of the ordinary places of deportation, though it is true that any one of the Cyclades or Sporades might have been chosen for this purpose, and so far as the Book now before us suggests an inference, it points rather to solitary exile and comparative freedom. There is no trace of the *custodia* of a state-prisoner, no indication of chains or sentinels in guard over him.

At such a time the thoughts of the exile would naturally turn to the Churches from which he was thus for a time separated. He would know the excellences, the trials, the perils of each. They would be prominent in his anxieties and prayers. He would crave to know what were the right words to speak at such a time to his companions in tribulation. The Churches to which he is told to write

were, perhaps, actually those with which, and with which alone, he had been personally connected ; but it is also possible that the habit of his mind was to group whatever was presented to it under definite numerical relations ; and that the number Seven, so full of sacred and mystic meaning, the symbol of completeness and of calm, seemed to him to include all the chief types of spiritual life with which he had been familiar. Certain it is that that number is nowhere more prominent as clothed with mystic meaning than it is in this Book. Over and above the seven golden candlesticks and the seven stars which correspond to the Churches, we have the seven lamps of fire and the seven Spirits before the Throne, the seven seals and trumpets, the seven thunders and angels and vials ; the beast with the seven heads, the seven mountains, and the seven kings. The seven Churches thus chosen were accordingly for him the types and representatives of the whole family of God. It may be said, as our induction from the seven messages will shew, that there has never been a Christian community, flourishing or decaying, exposed to the dangers of persecution or prosperity, that may not find its likeness in one or other of them.

And to these Churches he writes with a salutation which the Epistles of St. Paul had made familiar,— “*Grace and peace,*” and which, so far as we know, had been used by none before him. Men felt that it was truer and deeper than the old *χαίρειν* of the Greeks in either of its senses ; more full of meaning than the “*Peace*” which had been the immemorial greeting of the Hebrews. It brought with it the

truth that "grace," the favour of God, was more than joy, and was the fountain of all peace ; it did not suggest, as *χαιρειν*, like our Farewell, had come to do, the idea of parting. In any case it is interesting to note the fact that St. John, to whom both the other greetings must have been familiar in the Church at Jerusalem (Acts xv. 23, and James i. 1), throws himself thus freely into Pauline phraseology. If I mistake not, even this coincidence, trivial as it may seem, is at least of some weight against the theory of some recent critics, that the Apocalypse is a polemic anti-Pauline treatise. The individuality of the writer asserts itself, however, in the words that follow. It is not, as with St. Paul, "Grace and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ," but, "from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come,"—or, as the Greek has it, with a singular disregard of the technical rules of grammar—*ἀπὸ τοῦ ὁ ὄν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἔρχόμενος*.

It would be idle to ascribe this departure from usage to any ignorance of those rules, and to infer from it the early date of the Apocalypse. It is clear that the Apostle looked on the Divine Name, though it took the form of words that admitted of inflexion, as having a character as sacred as that of Jehovah or Adonai had been in his mother tongue, not losing its majesty by changing its unapproachable loftiness. The LXX. translation of Exod. iii. 14 had made '*O'ΩΝ* ("He that is") the Greek equivalent for the I AM of our English Bible; and that was, therefore, naturally the first word in the strange compound which the Apostle formed to express the Eternity of God. But that Eter-

nity, that Ever-present Being, might be thought of as stretching into the infinite past and the infinite future, and two other names were wanted. The Greek verb of being, however, had no past participle, and therefore he had to fall back upon its imperfect tense, "the He was." It might, of course, have supplied him with a future *ó ἐσόμενος*, but from that word he turned aside, partly, it may be, because it would have suggested the thought of coming into being at some future point of time, partly because Hebrew phraseology had led him to find the thought of futurity in the verb "to come." And so we have *ó ἐρχόμενος*, "he that cometh." It is possible that the familiar "he that cometh" of the Gospels, applied by the Jews of Galilee and Jerusalem to the expected Christ, might have helped to determine the choice of that word; but the distinct mention of Christ in the next verse forbids us to refer the words even remotely to the thought of his second coming to judge the world. The one idea which the Apostle strove to embody was that of the Eternal Now, as contemplated in the time before the world, and as it shall be when God shall once more be all in all. It is scarcely possible to think of this Divine Name without remembering that inscription so strangely like, so yet more strangely different, of which Plutarch speaks as being in the Temple of Athene (the Egyptian Isis) at Sais: "I am all that has come into being, and that which is and that which shall be" (*'Εγω εἰμι πᾶν τὸ γεγονός, καὶ ὁν, καὶ ἐσόμενον*), "and no man hath lifted my veil." Alike in contemplating the mystery of existence as spreading through the infinite past into the infinite future,

they differ in all else as widely as any two creeds that the world has ever seen. The one, in its identification of God with the universe, in its postulate of an "Ever-becoming" instead of an Eternal Being, in the absolute exclusion of personality by its use of the neuter form of the participles; in its assertion that the Deity thus described is the unknown and unknowable, is the despairing creed of the Pantheist. The other is the proclamation of the name of One who is not only the I AM THAT I AM, but the Everlasting Father, revealing Himself through his Son. Is it altogether too bold a conjecture to suggest that the contrast between the two formulae was deliberate and designed? The inscription at Sais was, we know, at this very time one of the familiar topics of many religious inquirers. Was it likely to have been unknown to the Alexandrian Jew who had recently been at Ephesus, mighty in the Scriptures, and not unversed, as a scholar of Philo, in the lore of Heathenism? Is not the contrast between the *ō ᾖν* and the *πᾶν τὸ γεγονός* identical in character with that so sharply drawn in the prologue to St. John's Gospel, between the self-same verbs, "He *was*" (*ὑπερ*) "in the beginning with God," and "All things *were made*" (*ἐγένετο*) "by him." (John i. 2, 3).

In the next words we have a yet more marked individuality. St. Paul nowhere joins the Spirit with the Father and the Son in the opening salutation of his Epistles. The nearest approach to such a combination was found in the well-known words of blessing of 2 Cor. xiii. 13, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." The

use of the three Names, however, in the formula for Gentile baptism (Matt. xxviii. 19), which by this time must, to a large extent, have superseded the earlier form, "In the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts ii. 38; viii. 16; xviii. 8), must have made it natural to use them in benedictions, as they were shortly afterwards used in doxologies; and we may add that the order in which the Names were to be used was shewn, by St. Paul's example in the words just cited, to be a variable one. We are startled, however, by a yet greater variation. He speaks not of the one Holy Spirit, but of "the Seven Spirits which are before the Throne." Why, we ask, should he, who so distinctly records afterwards and must even now have remembered the teaching of the Lord Jesus as to the One Spirit, the Paraclete, bring in here the idea of plurality? The answer is to be found, in part, in the nature of the visions which he proceeds to record. He had seen "the seven lamps of fire burning before the Throne" (iv. 5), and the seven eyes of the Lamb (v. 6), and had learnt to see in each of these the symbol of the Seven Spirits of God, as representing in their completeness all gifts of illumination and insight that are possessed by God, and are communicated to man. That imagery rested on the older symbolism of a prophet whom the writer of the Revelation seems to have studied devoutly. In the visions of Zechariah also there had been seen the seven lamps, or branches of the one lamp (Zech. ii. 2.), the seven Eyes of God (Zech. ii. 9; iii. 10.), as symbols of his Eternal Light and all-embracing Knowledge. But the genesis of the symbol carries us yet higher. In the

passage in Isaiah (xi. 2), which had most impressed on men the thought that the Messianic King was to be filled by the Spirit, there were found numerically seven spiritual gifts, each described as being an attribute of the One Spirit of the Lord. As an influence nearer to the Apostle's own time and traceably operating in other instances (as, *e.g.*, in that of the Logos) on his thoughts and phraseology, we may note the fact that Philo also speaks of the number seven in its mystical import as identical with unity, as unity developed in diversity, and yet remaining one. The Seven Spirits were, therefore, under such conditions of thought, the fit symbols of the diversities of gifts bestowed by the one and self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He wills.

It was to be expected that one who had first learnt to know God in Christ, the Father through the Son, should reserve the fulness of his thoughts and speech for Him whom he had thus known and loved. And the words are every way characteristic. For him the first great attribute which attaches to the name of Christ is that of "the faithful witness." That was the thought which had been prominent in the personal teaching of his Lord as recorded in his Gospel. He had come into the world to bear witness to the truth. (John xviii. 37.) He testified that which he had seen and heard. (John iii. 11, 32.) Though in one sense He did not testify of Himself, but of the Father, yet the works which the Father had given Him to do bore their witness of Him. (John v. 36.) But this thought also attached itself to Divine words of earlier date. In the very pro-

phecy which, as speaking of the “sure mercies of David,” had come to be looked on as essentially Messianic (Acts xiii. 34), as the sequel to the invitation, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,” which is quoted by St. John himself in this very book (Rev. xxi. 6; xxii. 17), we find the character of the coming Christ portrayed as one who is to be given as “a witness to the people” (Isaiah lv. 4). In the Psalm, which had in like manner acquired a like significance, the reign of the future King was described as that of one who should be as the “faithful witness” in Heaven (Psa. lxxxix. 38); and if those words referred, as they have been thought to do, to the “bow in the cloud” as being, like the moon in her vicissitudes and her sameness, the ever-recurring token of the stability of the Divine promise, then “the rainbow round about the Throne, in sight like unto an emerald,” of Rev. iv. 3, may well have recalled the very words (*ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστὸς*) which had been used of it by the Psalmist. But the Christ is also “the first-begotten from the dead and the Prince of the kings of the earth.” The reference which we have just traced to the great Messianic Psalm explains in part these words also. If that Psalm had been present in its completeness to the writer’s memory, he would find there that it was said of the Divinely-appointed King, “I will make Him my first-born” (*πρωτότοκος*, LXX.), “higher<sup>1</sup> than the kings of the earth.” More noticeable still is the fact that the very words now used by St. John had been used before by

<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew for “higher” is **גּוֹדֵעַ**, the “Most High” of the Divine name, so prominent in many passages both of the Old and New Testament.

St. Paul (Col. i. 18), and that we must therefore infer either that the name had come, through the teaching of that Apostle, to be familiar to all the Asiatic Churches, or that the Disciple, who has been sometimes thought of as representing a different section of the Church and a different phase of teaching, deliberately adopted a title which St. Paul had used before him. But it must be remembered also that to him the words came with a special significance and power. He had seen his Lord after He was risen. He had heard the words, "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth." He had witnessed the great proof of that claim of Sovereignty in the Ascension into Heaven. And so his whole view of the world and its order had been changed. Above all emperors and kings, above all armies and multitudes, he thought of the Crucified as ruling and directing the course of history, and certain in his own due time to manifest his sovereignty.

In this last clause of the opening words of salutation the Apostle had been as regardless of the technical rules of language as he had been in the first. Here also the epithets stand, not in the genitive, as in apposition with the name of Christ, but in their unimpaired majesty, in the nominative. But that salutation is hardly ended before, with the speech of one who writes as in the ecstasy of adoration, he passes from it to a doxology. And the doxology thus uttered is marked by some special characteristics. It is not, as those of St. Paul for the most part are, addressed to the Father only, or to the Father through the Son, but directly and emphatically to Jesus Christ. Knowing, as we do, the

horror with which every devout Israelite shrank from ascribing Divine Glory to any but the Divine Being, we cannot but see in this the recognition that the Lord Jesus Christ, the first-begotten from the dead, was also one with the Father; that to Him, no less than to the Eternal, were due all glory and might for ever and ever. If there are still those who contend that prayer and praise and adoration were not offered by the Apostolic Church to the person of the Son, this takes its place among the foremost witnesses against their error. But the substance of the doxology is even more remarkable. The preceding words had spoken of the glory of the Christ in his own essential majesty. These tell of the special relation in which He stood to the spiritual life of the Apostle who wrote, and to all his fellow-believers : “*To Him that loveth us*” (I follow the better-supported reading, *τῶ ἀγαπῶντι*, the present, not the past), “*and washed us*” (I see no adequate reason for preferring *λύσαντι* to *λούσαντι*) “*with his own blood.*” We need scarcely dwell on the thought which had impressed itself upon the mind of the Disciple that the Lord, who had loved him with so deep and personal an affection upon earth, was still loving him, and loving others with an equal love, now that He was in Heaven. There is a deeper interest in the clause which speaks of the special act of which he thought as manifesting that love. It tells us, if I mistake not, that he had entered now into the full meaning of words that had once been dark and dim to him. We can hardly suppose that the hard saying, “He that is washed needeth not to save wash his feet, but is clean every whit” (John xiii. 10), had been clear at the time

to those who heard it. Who was to give them that entire cleansing? How were they to maintain their purity by that daily washing of the feet? The words came, we may believe, with a new force to the mind of the disciple who records them, when he stood by the Cross and saw the water and the blood flow from the pierced side of Him who hung there. How deep the impression of that moment was we see in the reference to it that follows immediately upon this. What we are now concerned with is the consciousness that then or afterwards it became clear within him that the Love which was consummated in that supreme act of sacrifice, the love which then seemed that of a man who "lays down his life for his friends," but was afterwards seen to be that of one who was content to die even for his foes, had a power which nothing else could have, to kindle a new love in his own heart also; and so, through the power of that new affection, to purify him from the taint of evil and from the close-clinging impurity of his lower selfish nature. Here was "the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness," in which the stains of the past life could be washed away. We are so familiar in hymns and sermons with the words and phrases which have flowed from this as from their source, that for the most part we hardly care to trace their *genesis* and meaning; but the process of thought and feeling, which I have ventured to indicate, seems the only legitimate explanation of the association of ideas, at first apparently so incompatible as are those of cleansing and of blood, which we find thus brought together. The two were at any rate linked indissolubly in the mind of the Apostle. He saw in

"the blood of Christ" that which "cleanseth from all sin" (1 John i. 7). The multitude of those whom he saw in vision "arrayed in white robes" had "washed those robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. vii. 13, 14).

But the train of thought thus originated led on in natural, or more truly perhaps, spiritual, sequence to another. Once before, as by some mystic embodiment of the great idea or dim foreshadowing of the great fact, blood had been received as the symbol of purification. The tabernacle and the vessels of the ministry had been sprinkled with it. In the bold language of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "almost all things are by the law purified with blood" (ix. 21). But the special cardinal instance of its use had been when Aaron and his sons had been consecrated to their priestly office. The two ideas, of being cleansed with blood and of entering on a priest's work, were accordingly closely linked together. But in that baptism of blood of which St. John thought the washing was not limited to any priestly family, but was co-extensive with the whole company of believers. They therefore had become what the older Israel of God was at first meant to be in idea and constitution, "a kingdom of priests."<sup>1</sup> That sprinkling of blood upon the whole people, before the great apostasy of the golden calf, had been the symbol that they too were all consecrated and set apart for their high calling. (Exod. xix. 6, 10; xxiv. 8.) So St. John (in this instance also following in the track of the Epistle to the Hebrews) looked on the true priest's work as not

<sup>1</sup> I follow this as a better reading than that which gives "hath made us kings and priests."

limited to any order of the ministry. All might offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, the incense of praise and adoration; all might pass within the veil, and enter into the Holiest, and plead for themselves and for their brothers in the power of the blood of Jesus. To Him then who had done such great things for them in the past, the beloved Disciple offers an ascription of praise and glory and power like that which went up from the lips of every devout Israelite to the Everlasting Father.

But the thoughts of the Seer travel on to the far future. The words that had been spoken by his Lord in his hearing in the High Priest's palace had claimed for the Christ the fulfilment of the vision of Daniel, in which the prophet had seen one like unto the Son of Man come with the clouds of heaven, even unto the Ancient of days. (Dan. vii. 13; Matt. xxvii. 14.) Even before that utterance of the truth, as he, with Peter and Andrew and James, had sat on the Mount of Olives, hearing from their Lord's lips that wondrous unveiling of the future, he had learnt that a day would come "when all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory." (Matt. xxiv. 29.) The reference here to that declaration is clear and unmistakeable, and so far we have a proof, in a book which the latest and least traditional criticism ascribes to the reign of Nero, which, at the latest, is as early as that of Domitian, that if not the whole Gospel of St. Matthew in its present shape, at least that prophetic discourse was already current, and recognized in the Churches of

Asia, or else that the memory of the writer of the Apocalypse supplied him with the selfsame record.

"And every eye shall see Him and they also which pierced Him." Here, as elsewhere, we have words which carry us back, first, to the Gospel of St. John, and, secondly, to the teaching of an older prophet. The Fourth Gospel alone records the fact which the writer, we must believe, alone of all the four, had seen with his own eyes, of the pierced side, and of the water and the blood. (John xix. 34, 37.) The writer of this book remembers that fact, and connects it with words which are a literal Greek rendering (not, be it observed, from the version of the LXX., which translates the words quite differently) of part of Zech. xii. 10. The Gospel, the later work, as we believe, of the same writer, does explicitly what is here done implicitly, and cites the prophecy as fulfilled in the event; and with identically the same variation from the current Greek version as that which we find here. It would be difficult, I think, to find anywhere a much stronger indirect proof of identity of authorship. It is clear, however, that St. John had learnt to generalize and idealize the event to which he thus refers. As those who fell away from the faith, or became its open enemies, crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh (Heb. vi. 6), so it was not only the lance of the Roman soldier that actually pierced Him, but much more all those whose sins of act or thought, whose want of faith and love, had been to Him as those of the inhabitants of Jerusalem had been, in the language of the older prophet, cutting and *piercing* to the quick. And that coming in the

clouds shall bring with it, so run the words of the Apostle, wailing and lamentation to all the kindreds of the earth. That Epiphany of the Judge in his Majesty and Righteousness cannot but call forth terror and dismay in all who under this name, "of the earth," earthly, are described as unholy and rebellious. The memory of past sins, the dread of penalty, the shame at having sinned against the Holiest, these will all be elements of woe and sorrow unspeakable. The words seem at first to tell not only of such ineffable anguish, but of a wailing hopeless and irremediable. We turn however, to the words of the older prophet, which, as we have seen, were clearly in St. John's thoughts; and there, so far from the picture of an irremediable penalty, we find that look on Him whom men had pierced connected closely with the pouring out "of the spirit of grace and supplication," with a great and bitter mourning, it is true, but also with the opening even then of the fountain for sin and for uncleanness. (Zech. xii. 10; xiii. 1.) So it was, we may believe, that the Seer, accepting the thoughts of the terror and judgment as coming from the Manifestation of One who was infinitely righteous, could contemplate that dark vision of the future without misgiving, and add, as in adoring acceptance, "Even so, Amen." And then for the first time the form of the message changes, and the voice of the Lord is heard speaking in his own name: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending" (these words, however, are wanting in the best manuscripts, and are probably a gloss upon the names of the Greek letters), "saith the Lord God" (I follow the best manuscripts in this

reading), “which is, and which was, and is to come, the Almighty.” I am not aware that there is any example in any writing earlier than the Apocalypse of this mystical use of the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, and the instances which are quoted of a like employment of the corresponding letters (corresponding, *i.e.*, in position) of the Hebrew alphabet, **שׁ** and **נּ**, are all of much later date. So far as the evidence goes it may well have been that St. John himself was the first to seize on that mystic significance, and to see in the two letters of the alphabet what was at least comparatively new to him, the symbol of the Eternity of God, so limitless that we can imagine nothing as either before or after it. As the words stand with the reading, “the Lord God,” and interpreted by what has gone before in verse 4, they refer primarily to the Eternity of the Father. We need not fear lest, in adopting that reading, we should sacrifice one jot or tittle of the witness which, with the received reading, the words have been thought to bear to the divinity of the Son. The more distinctly we refer them to “the Almighty” in the Old Testament sense of the word (*ὁ παντοκράτωρ*, the LXX. rendering of the Lord of Sabaoth—the Lord of Hosts), the more wonderful is their explicit application in the immediate sequel to Him, rather, their utterance *by* Him, who was seen in the midst of the seven golden Candlesticks.

E. H. PLUMPTRE.

*THE PROLOGUE OF ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL.<sup>1</sup>*

I.—THE DESIGN OF THE PROLOGUE.

In order to form a just estimate of the general character of this Gospel we must first obtain a solution of the question,—What was the Evangelist's idea in placing this Introduction at the head of his narrative? Was his design speculative or practical?

The Prologue is summed up in three thoughts, which also determine its plan. They may be expressed in three words: THE Logos; the Logos *disowned*; the Logos *acknowledged* and regained. We may therefore say,—the Word, Unbelief, Faith. These three fundamental ideas correspond with the three principal aspects of the history as it is related in this Gospel: the revelation of the Logos, the unbelief of the Jewish people, the faith of the Disciples. Thus understood, the arrangement of this portion becomes clear. Between the first part (verses 1–5) and the second (verses 6–11) verse five forms a transition, as verses twelve and thirteen connect the second part

<sup>1</sup> A Dissertation from F. Godet's admirable "Commentary on the Gospel of St. John," translated by the Rev. E. W. Shalders, B.A.

To scholars, Godet needs no "letter of commendation." But I may be permitted, perhaps, to advise the unlearned readers of THE EXPOSITOR to read this brief series of papers, and read them again, till they have mastered them. They will find them well within their reach, if they do not suffer themselves to be repelled by the use of a few technical terms, or by a discussion of theories with which they are not familiar. And I believe that, if they will be at the pains of mastering this Dissertation on St. John's Prologue, they will possess themselves of a very clear, true, and helpful interpretation of the sublimest passage, but also one of the most profound and difficult passages, in the whole range of the New Testament Scriptures.—ED.

with the third (verses 12–18), which, in its turn, is in close connection with the first. The relation of this last part to the first, indicated by the similarity of thought and expression which may be observed between verse eighteen and verse one, may be expressed thus: The Person whom the Apostles beheld, who was proclaimed by John the Baptist, and in whom the Church believed (verses 12–18), is none other than He whose existence and supreme greatness have been indicated by the title Logos. The Church possesses, therefore, in its Redeemer the Creator of all things, the essential Light, the Principle of Life, God Himself. The original link between man and God, which sin had impaired (verse 5), and which unbelief completely broke (verse 11), is for the believer perfectly restored; and, by means of faith, the law of Paradise (verse 4) becomes once more the law of human history (verses 16–18). Thus the Prologue forms a compact organic whole, of which the germinal thought is this: by the Incarnation believers are restored to that communion with the Word and that living relation with God of which man had been deprived by sin.

In considering the question whether this Introduction has in view speculation or practice, knowledge or faith, we meet with three opinions: the first attributes to the author a purely speculative aim; the second maintains a practical aim complicated with metaphysical prepossessions; according to the third, the Author, in ascending to the first principles of Christian knowledge, has no other end in view than that which he declares he proposed to himself

in writing his Gospel : “*In order that ye might believe*” (xx. 31).

1. The Tübingen school is the ablest and most consistent exponent of the first view. According to this opinion, the Author sets forth in the Prologue the idea which is the *metaphysical basis* of the following narrative, which is even to a large extent its source. The Gnostic principles of an intermedium between the infinite God and the finite world, and of a primordial opposition in the universe between light and darkness, are placed by the Prologue at the base of the Gospel history ; and the design of the latter is not to relate actual facts, but solely to illustrate these ideas. The Prologue is not subservient to the narrative ; but the narrative subserves the speculative idea which finds its clearest expression in the Prologue.

This view of the Prologue cannot, however, be maintained. If exegesis yields any certain result, it is that the Author is not interested in the notion of the Logos for its own sake, but simply as serving to exhibit in all its grandeur the historical appearance of Jesus. The sentence, “*The Word was made flesh*,” was not written for the sake of, “*In the beginning was the Word* ;” on the contrary, the latter leads up to the former. John never dreams of deriving from the life of Jesus Christ an argument in favour of the existence of a being called the Logos ; so far from this, he only mentions the Logos that he may more clearly set forth what Jesus was and what He is for us. He is not inviting his readers to a metaphysical exploration of the depths of the Divine Essence, but simply persuading them

to put their whole trust in the historical Christ, that they may have access through Him to the riches of God. As to the dualist system,<sup>1</sup> so little does the Author concern himself with it, that the doctrine is not so much as mentioned in his teaching.

Nothing, perhaps, is better fitted to exhibit the complete opposition between the intention which Baur assigns to the Prologue and the real aim of the Evangelist than the forced explanation which this scholar has given of verse fourteen. This proposition, "*The Word was made flesh*," in which the feeling of the Church has always recognized the central thought of the Prologue, occupies, according to Baur, quite a subordinate place in it. So far from denoting a leading fact, as the fact of the Incarnation would be, it only expresses the phenomenon of the *visibility* of the Word, a phenomenon which is historically insignificant and almost superfluous. Salvation therefore could in no way depend upon this fact. Its only object would be to give us a livelier *impression* of his condescension. This explanation, or, rather, this elimination of the salient passage of the Prologue, agrees no doubt very admirably with a system which makes the entire Gospel history a mere transparency adapted to glorify an *idea*. But it demonstrates, better than all proofs, the irreconcilable contradiction between the speculative idealism of the Tübingen theologian and the earnest healthy realism of the Evangelist.

2. M. Reuss has taken good care not to fall into such an exaggeration. He recognizes the essentially

<sup>1</sup> The system which assumes the existence of Good and Evil as rival and opposed powers.

practical tendency of the Prologue, and acknowledges that before everything John desires to bring his readers to the faith. But, driven out at the door, the speculative intention comes back through the window. John, while setting forth, with a view to faith, the object of faith, adds to it a speculative thesis. "Convinced, as were the other Apostles, of the superhuman nature of Jesus, John," says M. Reuss, "borrows from the schools the metaphysical theory which admits of the readiest adaptation to their belief, and furnishes the best explanation of it."<sup>1</sup> Simple religious faith, therefore, is not sufficient either for himself or for the Church. He wants to explain the matter of his belief philosophically, and the notion of the Logos is the means furnished him by contemporaneous philosophy for the attainment of his object. The invitation to faith thus becomes transformed under the very pen of the Evangelist into an initiation of his readers into the Christian Gnosis. Lücke's conscientious work leads also to the same result.

This view, while preserving on the one hand the apostolic and practical character of the Prologue, which Baur's opinion completely obliterates, succeeds on the other in accounting for the use of a term belonging to the language of speculation, that of Logos. Thus the problem appears solved. In the next section we shall seek the real source whence John has derived his conception of the Logos, and the reason why he has here made use of a term that seems so foreign to religious phraseology. Meanwhile, we offer the following observations on the opinion of M. Reuss.

<sup>1</sup> "Hist. de la Théol. Chrét.," t. ii. p. 346.

This explanation appears hardly compatible with the tone of the first propositions of the Prologue. John does not speak like a metaphysician searching for truth, but like a man who possesses and reveals it. If this oracular tone were employed solely in support of a common-place of contemporary metaphysics, would not the sublime simplicity of these opening sentences, which has charmed all ages, become simple charlatanism and mere bathos?

Another result of M. Reuss's view would be that John must have fused into an unique whole elements derived from the teaching of Jesus and those which he had borrowed from the metaphysics of Philo. Is it really conceivable that an apostle would have allowed himself to make such an admixture, and have thought himself at liberty to offer to the faith of the Church this bread made up of bran and flour? If John wanted to give permanence by writing to the theory of the Logos, which had been, as is alleged, of such eminent service to himself, in interpreting his own faith, could he not at least have done it in the epistolary form, with which he was well acquainted and which he actually employed? Was he at liberty to set to work and compose a gospel for such a purpose? Or would St. John, with M. Rénan, have regarded Philo as "the elder brother of Jesus?"<sup>1</sup>

M. Reuss appears, it is true, to regard this procedure on the part of the Apostle as unconscious and innocent. Unconscious! That is psychologically impossible. Besides, we have an unanswerable proof to the contrary. Long ago it was ob-

<sup>1</sup> "Vie de Jesus," p. 9.

served that John never puts the term Logos into the mouth of his Master. He was, therefore, fully conscious of the difference between what he derived directly from his teaching and what proceeded from any other source. Innocent! Upon this point history has passed judgment, and its sentence is severe. History avers, in fact, that of all the books of the New Testament, it is the Gospel of John especially, and of all parts of that Gospel, the Prologue, which has prepared the way for *Jesuolatry*, and by this means kept Christianity for these eighteen centuries past in a state of modified paganism. Julian the Apostate spoke from experience, "It is John who declares that the Word was made flesh; . . . and he must be regarded as *the source of all the mischief.*"<sup>1</sup> A very grave result of the innocent speculative attempts of John! The Apostle has thrown the leaven of idolatry with his own hand into the meal of the Gospel, and this has actually leavened the whole mass, falsified its doctrine, impaired its worship in spirit and truth, and wrought a disastrous change in the very sources of Christian life. It is only at the present day that the world, waking up from this vertigo, lays its hand upon the guilty Author of the mischief already pointed out by Julian. Of the Apostate and the Disciple whom Jesus loved, it is the former, therefore, that was in the right! But, then, what must we think of the latter? What must we think of the Master who had chosen and favoured him; of the Master who had placed the general teaching of his Apostles under

<sup>1</sup> Cyril, "Cont Julian." Cited by A. Nicolas, "Études Philosoph. le Christianisme," t. iv. p. 117.

the Divine guarantee,—“*He that heareth you, heareth me*”?

The procedure which M. Reuss attributes to the Apostle becomes wholly inadmissible when we study its bearing in the light of the text of the Prologue. According to this scholar, it would seem that the theory of the Logos was only an accidental superfluity, having to do simply with the rational form, without any root in the religious faith of John. It is easy to convince oneself of the contrary. This alleged theory is not a simple accessory in the Prologue, it constitutes its substance, and represents, not the philosophy of John, but his faith with all that is most essential and vital to it. FOR JOHN, JESUS IS THE LOGOS, OR HE IS NOTHING. If the unbelief of the Jews is something monstrous in his eyes, it is because in rejecting Jesus they have rejected the Logos. If faith regenerates and saves, it is because it restores us, through Jesus, to communion with the Logos. What is affirmed in this case is, that the form, if form there be, takes away the substance. And we must conclude that a metaphysical formula so completely absorbs the living object of faith in the heart of John, the Jesus whom he had known, that the latter would be nothing in his eyes without it! We must infer that he, the witness of this Life, the intimate friend of this Master, in his speculative dream, has come to think of the quickening power of the Gospel as no longer residing in his person, but in a philosophical conception of Him which he has invented! To this there is but one reply: it is morally impossible.

Fortunately the text of the Prologue, rightly

understood, will not justify, nay, altogether excludes, the point of view of which these disastrous consequences are the logical result. The employment of the term *Logos*, although having reference doubtless to certain contemporary speculations, was not suggested to John by any speculative intention; perhaps we shall even find that its use was dictated by an intention the very reverse of speculative. Either way, the text clearly shows that, when he speaks of the *Logos*, John has no thought of himself giving a revelation concerning the Divine essence; his object is to lead the reader to receive in unquestioning faith the revelation which God gave us by Jesus Christ, and which is preserved in this Gospel; it is with this aim that he designates Jesus as the *Logos*, that is, as the perfect, the absolute Revealer. The true application, therefore, of this title is not, "Rise with me to the conception of the second Person of the Trinity!" but, "Believe in Him who has given us, in his word and in his life, the perfect manifestation of the Divine Being!"

3. Exegesis, therefore, finds no trace of any speculative intention, either dominant or accessory, in this Prologue. Everything in it bends to a practical aim. All John concerns himself about is faith. If Jesus is called *Logos*, it is not to lead us to speculate upon the *Logos*, but to believe in Jesus, by receiving Him as the perfect Mediator between God and man, the Principle of Life, the incomparable Revealer. All these attributes are comprehended under the name *Logos*; and this title, by its intrinsic richness and very strangeness, yields satisfaction to faith. It remains to ascertain more

precisely what was John's idea in placing this magnificent inscription on the front of the edifice raised by his hands.

Upon this question, the connection which we have pointed out between the fundamental ideas of the Prologue and the essential elements of the subsequent narrative, does not permit us to be in doubt. The Prologue is intended to be the key to the Gospel. It initiates the reader into the true meaning of the facts narrated ; it reveals to him their august character, unexampled greatness, and vital importance. The Prologue resembles the technical sign placed at the beginning of a piece of music to indicate to the player the manner in which it should be executed. To raise the mind of the reader to the real height of the drama which is to be unfolded to his view ; to make him feel that this is a history which must not be confounded with other histories, which, when read, are cast aside ; that it contains the secret of the life of humanity and of his own ; that the words he is about to read are nothing less than beams of truth radiating from the absolute Word ; that, accepted, they will be his salvation ; rejected, his death ; that unbelief is the denial of God; faith, God accepted and enjoyed : this is the true aim and sole thought of the Prologue. It is just a commentary on the title, *Gospel*, God's grandest message to the world, given first in the Gospel history and then in the books which contain it. From the very first line of the subsequent narrative the reader finds himself transported into that Divine sphere to which this history belongs, and which, in a certain sense, it never leaves ; and the

reading of this book brings him into immediate contact with the Divine Being who still reveals Himself in it at the present hour, just as He manifested Himself in the actual history.

Such is the result to which we are led by an impartial and accurate exegesis of the Prologue. We see that John, in writing it, never for one moment departed from his function as an apostle. His book is, indeed, from the first word to the last, a Gospel, neither more nor less,—an appeal to faith. It only remains, in order to remove the last ground of doubt respecting it, to give an explanation of the notion and of the term Logos, and to prove that while the Apostle is accused of borrowing from contemporary metaphysics, it is in reality his accusers who have forced these loans upon him.

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### THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

#### CHAPTER I. VERSES 1-8.

ST. PAUL, when addressing individuals as well as Churches, was accustomed to describe himself as an "*Apostle of Christ Jesus*." The only exception to the rule was in the private letter to *Philemon*. Timothy was placed in difficult circumstances; and, though he was an intimate friend, he was being called to discharge functions which needed moral and official support. We need not be surprised, therefore, to find that Paul at the outset claimed the title which gave all its significance to his own life-work. He fortified the claim by declaring that he was an "*apostle according to the commandment of God*,"

such "commandment" as he felt and knew sometimes to be given to him, and sometimes to be withheld.<sup>1</sup> The event to which he referred was described in Acts xiii. 2, when "the Holy Ghost said, Separate to me Barnabas and Saul unto the work whereunto I have called them." Elsewhere Paul speaks of his apostolate as "by the *will* of God."<sup>2</sup> God's "will" was the source of the "commandment." In the Pastoral Epistles, and in this place, he attributes to God a designation not elsewhere found in his writings, viz., "*our Saviour*." This need not surprise us, for he was accustomed to speak of *Christ* as the Saviour,<sup>3</sup> and he refers "salvation" to God;<sup>4</sup> and the phrases, "God, the Saviour," and the "God who saveth thee," are found in the LXX. and Apocrypha,<sup>5</sup> and in the New Testament,<sup>6</sup> as well. The expression is full of wealth, and shews how the great heart of the Apostle had warmed to the thought of God as the fountal source of all the blessedness and hope of man.<sup>7</sup> The appointment of Paul to the apostolate was mediated or ministered to him by "*Christ Jesus, our hope*."<sup>8</sup> It is because God *is* our Saviour that Christ becomes the ground of all our hope; while, as a matter of revelation, when "*Christ Jesus*" is seen and felt to be "*our hope*," then we learn the deeper mystery of the Divine Fatherhood and the pulsations

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 6, 25; 2 Cor. viii. 8; cf. Tit. i. 1.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. i. 1; 2 Cor. i. 1; 2 Tim. i. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Eph. v. 23; Phil. iii. 20.      <sup>4</sup> 2 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Cor. i. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Psa. cv. 21; Isa. xliii. 3, 11; xlvi. 15; Hos. xiii. 4; Eccles. li. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Luke i. 47; Jude 25.

<sup>7</sup> A variety of readings prevent our attaching much importance to the presence or absence of the article before *σωτῆρος*.

<sup>8</sup> All the modern editors omit the *κυρίου* before *χριστοῦ*.

of the Eternal Love. He is our hope, (1) because he is the organ and manifestation of the method of our salvation; (2) because his indwelling within us and our mystic union to Him constitute the hope of glory; (3) because the desire and expectation of being like Him (*i.e.*, our “hope in [ $\epsilon\pi\iota$ ] Him) purifies us, even as He is pure; (4) because our final and full communion with Him will be the fruition of all we hope for in the heavens.

“*Paul, an Apostle of Christ Jesus,*” dignified with such living and ennobling relationships, addressed Timothy, as his “*very own son in the faith.*” This word ( $\gamma\eta\sigma\iota\omega$ ) is used in contradistinction to the “adopted son” or the “bastard child,” and figuratively expresses the closest intimacy and the most endearing affection. Paul was his spiritual father, and Timothy had caught many of his lineaments. In writing to the Philippians, Paul had said, “I have no one (no ministerial companion) like-minded (with him) who will, by spiritual birthright ( $\gamma\eta\sigma\iota\omega\varsigma$ ), be solicitously anxious concerning your affairs;”<sup>1</sup> and he told the Corinthians<sup>2</sup> that Timothy was “his beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who would put them in remembrance of his ways in Christ, as he was teaching everywhere in every Church.” Timothy was, therefore, intimately acquainted with the standpoint of Paul, with the controversy between him and the impugners of his Divine commission, with the general method of his teaching, and with the quality of his practical advice on disputed questions of ethical and ecclesiastical importance. Many commentators, Huther, Leo, Winer, and others, agree that the phrase

<sup>1</sup> Phil. ii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 17.

"in faith," or, "in (the) faith" [Alford] should be attached to the whole compound expression,—"my very own son."<sup>1</sup>

In giving the apostolic benediction Paul differed slightly from his usual phraseology. On addressing Timothy and Titus he adopted the additional word which John also used in his beautiful letter to *Kyria*.<sup>2</sup> Between *grace* and *peace* he introduces *mercy*. The speciality is no mark of a forger, but precisely the reverse. If a *falsarius* had been striving to imitate the Apostle's style for a purpose, he would surely have avoided such a deviation. The late Dr. Fairbairn has made the best suggestion in explanation of its introduction here. "He knew how much he needed mercy for himself, not merely at the outset of his spiritual career, but when engaged in his work as an ambassador of Christ." None are more conscious of their need of *mercy* than those who try to represent their Master's claims and to plead his cause with their fellow-men. Huther says that these three expressions refer to one and the same thing viewed under different aspects. This is true so far as *LOVE* is the generic central thought of each expression. Each term is a predicate of love. *Grace* is the most comprehensive expression of the three, denoting all the effluence of love, in favour shewn and strength bestowed. *Mercy* is "love" when it is shewn, or grace when it is imparted to the undeserving and guilty. *Peace* is the "love of God" when "shed abroad in the heart," inducing reconciliation and rest. The two former denote the active sources; the latter, the blessed results of heavenly love.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Tit. i. 4.

<sup>2</sup> 2 John 1.

St. Paul having thus analysed with the prism of holy sympathy the eternal Beam into its three constituent elements, now proclaims the living origin of all the *love*. “Grace, mercy, and peace [are] from God the Father and Christ Jesus the Lord.” This is a combination of ideas frequently occurring in the Pauline writings: and what a conception it gives of the supreme dignity and superlative rank in the universe attributed by Paul to Christ Jesus! “Jesus Christ” is here associated with “God the Father” in bestowing gifts which can only take their origin in the very depths of the Godhead.<sup>1</sup>

*Verse 3.*—The sentence which the Apostle then commences with the particle “*Even as*” is never completed. Some have found the *apodosis* in verse 8, and others in verse 12. But such suppositions create ponderous and useless difficulties and produce no satisfactory result. We may reasonably suppose that Timothy was left to supply a simple repetition of the verb, and thus to effect a passage from remembered advice given on a previous occasion, to the obvious intention of the present injunction: *Even as I besought thee to abide in Ephesus, when I was on my journey into Macedonia [so I beseech thee still].*<sup>2</sup> We need not revert any further to the difficulty of finding place in the narrative of the *Acts* for the event here described. Expositors from Chrysostom downwards have called attention to Paul’s use of the

<sup>1</sup> Bengel, on Romans i. 7, says, “Una eademque gratia, una eademque pax, a Deo et Christo.”

<sup>2</sup> The interesting Sections lxiii., lxiv., of Winer’s Grammar, on “the ellipses of the simple sentence” may be referred to with advantage. Cf. Rom. v. 12; xi. 21; Matt. xvi. 7; John v. 6, 7; 2 Pet. ii. 4.

words, “I besought,” or “I exhorted,” when, as in writing to Titus,<sup>1</sup> he might have said, “I ordered,” or “commanded,” or “appointed.” In writing to Philemon, Paul drew a contrast between the two words which is worthy of notice.<sup>2</sup> Ellicott thinks if the present instead of aorist infinitive (*προσκείναι*) had been used, the duration of Timothy’s residence in Ephesus would have been more marked; but I am inclined, with Winer, to regard the use of the aorist in this sentence as determined simply by the aorist of the previous and governing verb.

The purport of Paul’s entreaty is now revealed. The Apostle and his “very own son in the faith” had found Ephesus distracted with crotchets, quivering with new excitements. Eager partizans of special interpretations of the older Scriptures had come to the front; Jewish allegories and Oriental theosophy, fables and genealogies, had twined themselves into a system of dubious teaching. The work of the Church was being paralysed by the unhealthy prominence given to a multitude of unimportant questions. A buzz of restless inquiries, which led to perilous controversy and unhealthy thought, was confusing the intelligence and obscuring the mind and worship of the Ephesian community. And so, though Paul had gone to Macedonia, he reiterated the request that Timothy should use the official authority with which he was invested to put these teachers of *another doctrine* to silence. As on a previous occasion when rebuking the Judaizers in Galatia he warned them against “another gospel, which was not another,” so now, with analogous phrase,

<sup>1</sup> Tit. i. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. 8-10.

those who are introducing as fundamental truths what were novel fancies are to be sharply warned. Then, as now, St. Paul condemned all personal additions to the teaching of which he had been the inspired organ. There is no need to look on into the second century in order to understand these references. The same kind of poisonous addition to the Gospel had infected the Churches in Crete.<sup>1</sup> “Jewish myths,” “endless genealogies,” “disputes about the law,” “antitheses of a falsely-named *gnosis*,” had made their appearance, and led to foolish and fruitless discussions, and, as the Apostle said, they were “*of a kind to produce controversy rather than to minister to God's way of salvation by faith.*” The case of Timothy's genealogy was one in point. His mother was a Jewess, his father was a Greek; and great discussion had prevailed as to the wisdom or necessity of his submitting to the ordinance of circumcision.

The *text* and the construction of the sentence require a word. The weight of authority<sup>2</sup> is in favour of the word *οἰκονομίαν* rather than *οἰκοδομίαν*, which was found in some manuscripts and Latin translations, and was accepted by the A.V. The change may have been suggested by the difficulty of finding a suitable translation of *παρέχουσι*, when governing the two ideas involved in “controversies” and “the dispensation of God,” or “the economy of grace,” or “God's way of salvation by faith.”

The lesson we may gather is, that whatever novel

<sup>1</sup> Tit. i. 4; iii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Chrysostom and Damianus read *οἰκονομίαν*, and ΣΑFG, &c.

teachings and methods of illustration simply lead to vain conflict and barren controversy, and have no healthy bearing upon the labours of a steward in God's house, ought not to be pursued. St. Paul says, "Hush them, discourage them, boldly and firmly repress them, son Timothy."

*Verse 5.—BUT.* The adversative force of the particle is not to be overlooked : it is as though the inquiry might arise whether there was a clearly-defined system of preceptive teaching or not in the Gospel of Christ, whether it could be trifled with, or could be over-pressed ; and the suggestion is thus made to Timothy that, though he was to charge and command with all boldness and firmness, he must not personally forget that "*the end of the commandment,*" or "*the scope and purport of the practical teaching and [of the] preceptive character of the Gospel is LOVE.*" The article before the word translated "commandment" makes it probable that the Apostle is dealing, not with the specific charge he had just given to Timothy, but with some well-understood body of solemn and sound injunctions.<sup>1</sup>

The "end," the "purport," of the new law of life is *Love*. Huther and Ellicott dispute Leo's statement that the love here spoken of is love to God as well as man. They do so on the principle that when *love* is thus used absolutely in the New Testament it has this limited reference. But the love referred to in the epistles both of Paul and John describes the right relation of the whole of human

<sup>1</sup> Here Leo has been too hastily condemned by Huther. Ellicott comes nearly to the conclusion stated above as to the meaning of *παραγγελίας*; so also Fairbairn.

nature to God and man, and is closely identifiable with the Divine life wrought within man by the Holy Spirit. The powers of "love" detailed by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians xiii. correspond almost verbally with "the fruits of the Spirit" which are enumerated in Galatians v. 22. Love to man in its highest sense is a consequent of love to God, and flows from it. The Apostle specifies *three* conditions of this love, and they apply with equal force to each of the great spheres of its operation. The first condition is, *a pure heart*. "With the heart, or in the heart, faith is exercised unto righteousness." "If thou believe in thy heart," says Paul (Romans x. 9), shewing there, as well as elsewhere, that *καρδία* denotes the region and the organ of mental operations (*cf.* 1 Cor. ii. 9; iv. 5; Matt. xv. 19. &c.) as well as of the emotional nature. With "the pure heart" (Matt. v. 8) it is alone possible to have the beatific vision of God; for, unless the whole interior man be purified, the power of love will fasten on selfish or ignoble objects. It is not a sentimental love which turns back upon self in the mere enjoyment of its own exercise, but the love which springs from clear insight and noble sacrificial self-forgetfulness, from a nature sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and duly responsive to the Eternal Love.

The Apostle shews the breadth of his conception of it in the second condition which he supplies—viz., *a good conscience*. Conscience, "self-consciousness," we learn from the New Testament may be "evil" as well as "good" and "pure." It may be "defiled" and "hardened" and "cauterized," even as tender flesh may be by heated iron. It may be burdened

with “guilt” or “void of offence.” Conscience ( $\sigmaυνείδησις$ ) may be regarded as a distinct faculty of the mind, or a name for that principle of reflection and self-consciousness which takes account of the whole inner and outer life, and represents the action of the whole mind, especially upon the matter of good and evil, the activity of the *ego* towards the ethical aspects of things. In either case conscience may be spoken of as “good,” if its operations are free and unbiassed, if it is active as opposed to dormant, if its perceptions of the standard of rectitude are vigorous, and its applications stimulate, direct, and, if necessary, scourge and goad the will into activity. It is, moreover, “good” in another sense if the conclusions at which it arrives are satisfactory, if it reveals a consciousness of inner honesty and rectitude, and is opposed to a sense of shame, of guilt, and of exposure to the Divine wrath. There can be no love to God or man that answers the Divine ideal unless it proceeds from a clear conscience. The mystery of the faith must be thus held (1 Tim. iii. 9) in the pure conscience. Until the conscience is healed and purified, and ceases to condemn, until we have confidence towards God, there is no love.

The third condition of love is *unfeigned faith*. This epithet—“unfeigned”—is applied to faith in 2 Tim. i. 5; to “love” in Rom. xii. 9; to heavenly wisdom in James iii. 17. The “faith” of which Paul here speaks must be free from all “dissembling,” all pretence of a confidence that is not felt. It must not be the mask of unbelief or of contradictory sentiments. It is strange that Paul should mention it last of all; yet this may be explained, because here

he penetrates to the deep principle, to the living source of both the clear conscience and the pure heart. "Conscience" and "heart" describe the sphere of the operation of the Divine Life and special departments of the human constitution. Faith, on the other hand, is the *seed-principle*, which, taking root in a purified heart and an active and peaceful conscience, will put forth therein the flowers and fruit of holy love. Now, in view of this ideal, some men utterly fail. *At these conditions of love*, at these virtues, at these indispensable methods of securing the true "end" of the sacred standard of the Gospel, "*certain persons have [taken but] missed their aim.*" The word *ἀστρέψεω* is often used by the later classical writers with a genitive of that from which the departure takes place. Alford quotes in proof of this two passages from Polybius. Plutarch also used the word in the same sense. Those who thus miss the true aim have, as a consequence, deflected their course, "*having swerved<sup>1</sup> to vain empty talking,*" instead of Divine love.

This "foolish babble" led to controversies, unwise speculations, "disputes about the law" (Tit. iii. 9), discussions about "myths and genealogies," which were barren of all practical advantage and hurtful to souls. Paul scorned and loathed all windy words and vain speculations that had no direct bearing upon holy living. These talkers without love are (verse 7) nevertheless *wishing to be regarded as teachers of the law.*

<sup>1</sup> Wettstein gives a whole column of quotations to explain the usage of the verb *ἐκτρέπεσθαι* (*cf.* Heb. xiii. 9). Bengel translates the word here, by *aversi sunt.*

We cannot see any justice in Baur's speculation, that the writer is referring to the Gnostic enemies of the Law, who did in fact despise and contemn the Law as evil. Yet Plancke and Leo go too far in the opposite direction when they find here the Judaizers of an earlier age. It appears to me that it cannot be made out finally whether those to whom Paul refers were laying emphasis on legal observance as a whole, or were merely deducing from the Law, by forced exegesis and dubious methods of interpretation, the unevangelical counsels and profitless quibbles which were beginning to starve or poison the Church. The doctrine of the Judaizers could hardly be described as a "vain babble;" nor were those who harassed Paul's earlier ministry ignorant of the Law "concerning which they made asseverations."

The statement (verse 8) is that their understandings as well as their hearts were at fault. There is a certain antithetic force (Ellicott) about the participle determinable by the context. *Although they are ignorant both of those things of which they speak—i.e., of their own myths, and genealogies, and texts, and traditions, and allegorical meanings; and of those things concerning which they make affirmations—i.e., THE LAW of which they profess to be the teachers.* Leo, Wiesinger, Ellicott, take this view, but De Wette regards it as a mistake to distinguish two objects to the two verbs. So Luther translates, *was sie sagen oder was sie setzen*. De Wette's reason is that in Tit. iii. 8,  $\delta\imath\alpha\beta\epsilon\beta\alpha\iota\omega\theta\alpha\iota$  is followed with  $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota$  of the matter affirmed. But there also the translation adopted here would be perfectly justifiable. These teachers struck at the root of all law,

and therefore of all love, of the commandment which was ordained unto life, and therefore at all the ethical grandeur of the Gospel of Christ. They said they were Jews, but were not, being the synagogue of Satan. The Lord from his glory compared them to Balaam, to Jezebel and her lovers. They professed by licentious freedom to sound the depths of God and scale heights sublimer than those of virtue, purity, and love. They infested the early Church, and well merited the condemnations of those who had entered into fellowship with the living Christ. One of the fond excesses of modern speculation has been an attempt to identify these enemies of righteousness with the believers in Pauline theology, and to suppose that Paul himself is the "vain man" condemned by St. James (ii. 20). The passage before us ought to be the refutation of the whole theory.

H. R. REYNOLDS.

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*GODET ON ST. LUKE.<sup>1</sup>*

I AM constantly receiving letters from readers of *THE EXPOSITOR* in which I am asked to point out those Commentaries which I judge to be real and valuable aids in the study of the various books of the Bible. In response to these appeals I hope, before long, to commence a series of papers on the Commentaries which I myself have most constantly in use, and especially on those—since these are most in demand—which the unlearned student of Scrip-

<sup>1</sup> "A Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke." By F. Godet. Translated from the French, by E. W. Shalders, B.A., and M. D. Cusins. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark.

ture will be likely to find most useful to him. Mean-time, though I must take it out of its proper place in the proposed series, I wish to say a few words on a Commentary lately issued by Messrs. Clark of Edinburgh,—a Commentary which will be most enjoyed by those who are familiar with New Testament Greek, but from which even those who know no language but that “wherein they were born” may derive much instruction, if, at least, they were born in England or France, and will not suffer themselves to be repulsed by the sprinklings of Greek and Hebrew type which will be found on its pages.

It is very strange and much to be regretted that there are so few Commentaries of the highest class on the Gospels. No thoughtful Christian, unbiassed by theological preconceptions, will hesitate to admit that, even in the Bible, there are no books of such priceless value as the four Memoirs which record the words and works of the Lord Jesus. And yet I believe it would be far easier to put into the English student's hands able and scholarly expositions of almost any other Scripture than of these. There is more than one Commentary on most of the Old Testament books, and on nearly all the Epistles of the New Testament, which I could recommend such a student to get; but I cannot name more than one on any of the Gospels, and not one on one of them. Dr. Morrison's Commentaries on St. Matthew and St. Mark, indeed, are simply invaluable. In brief compass they give all that most students really need to know of what previous expositors have said; while yet they state with singular and idiomatic force the learned author's own interpretations of the Sacred

Records. His interpretations, moreover, are marked by a notable blending of strong common sense and profound spiritual insight, of orthodoxy and yet of breadth of view. Dr. Godet's Commentary on St. Luke possesses, as we shall see, very similar qualities, and is hardly less valuable. But on the Gospel of St. John we have still, so far as I am aware, to wait for the appearance of an exposition which can be regarded as satisfactory. Let us hope that Messrs. Clark—to whom students of the Bible already owe much—may soon be induced to give us a translation of Godet's Commentary on that Gospel as admirable as that which they now give us on St. Luke's.

Dr. Godet, like Dr. Morison, combines in a singular degree spiritual insight with broad good sense. He has, too, the rare gift of moderation, sober-mindedness. He does not suffer himself to be carried away by extreme views, from whatever quarter they may come, but weighs all views in the scale of an even and balanced judgment. He is far from being insensible to the influence of the scientific criticism of the age; on the contrary, he listens to its arguments with impartiality, and accepts them gratefully in so far as they are conclusive: but, at the same time, he takes a firm stand against its mere vagaries and conjectures, when it seeks to wrest the Sacred Records into conformity with its own foregone conclusions; and however willing he is to yield its arguments, not only as far as he *must*, but as far as he *may*, he holds with a wise and devout constancy to the supernatural elements of the Gospel history, elements which are, indeed, involved

in the very fact of *Revelation*. He is a sincere and firm believer in the Incarnation and the Resurrection, and in all the truths logically implied in these great historical facts; so that, even when he surrenders this passage or that to the force of critical argument, or cuts some common hypothesis or prejudice against the grain, no attentive reader can for a moment fear lest he should be led away from "the *simplicity* of Christ," *i.e.*, from his single-minded loyalty and devotion to Christ.

Dr. Godet opens with an *Introduction*, of the value of which I cannot decisively speak since, unfortunately, the sheet containing pp. 33-50 has been omitted in the copy that has been sent to me. But it is obvious from the Commentary itself that he holds St. Luke to be the true author of the Gospel that bears his name, to have drawn what is peculiar to his Gospel from St. Paul, and to have written his Gospel during the Apostolic age.

The Commentary proper is clear and terse in style, often compressing valuable suggestions into the compass of a single sentence. In its moderation and sobriety, its freedom from bookishness and technicality, its vital relation to the facts of human life and experience, it closely resembles the highest type of English Commentary, and is therefore far more readable by an English student than the Commentaries which of late have been so plentifully imported from Germany. It differs from our highest standard—from the work of such men as Dr. Morison and Canon Lightfoot—in that it does not give the results of a reading so wide, limiting itself too much to modern German literature, and in that it addresses itself too generally to answer

those critics in whom scepticism has degenerated into unbelief of the facts and truths which the Church holds most dear.

As an instance of its clear and compact style, as well as of its good sense and spiritual insight, take the following annotation on the final clause of Chap. xxiv. 28 :

"When Jesus *moved* as if He would continue his journey, it was not a mere feint. He would really have gone on but for the sort of constraint which they exercised over Him. Every gift of God is an invitation to claim a greater (*χιαστὴν ἀρτὶ χάριτος*. John i. 16). But most men stop very quickly on this way ; and thus they never reach the full blessing (2 Kings xiii. 14-19)."

Here the true explanation of an acknowledged difficulty is suggested in the fewest words ; and, in addition, the thoughts naturally arising out of the recorded event are stated with equal brevity. No doubt many a minister will see a whole sermon in these few short sentences, which might so easily have been printed as only two, and will hew it out much to the edification of his flock.

Or take the following on Luke xix. 8, partly because of its expository merit, and partly because Robertson of Brighton has been much taken to task for assuming the point (First Series, Sermon V.), which Godet here reasons out and defends :

"Most modern interpreters take the words of Zaccheus as a vow inspired by gratitude for the grace which he has just experienced. '*Iδού, behold,*' is taken to indicate a sudden resolution : 'Take note of this resolution : From this moment I give, . . . and I pledge myself to restore . . . ?' But if the present tense *I give* may certainly apply to a gift which Zaccheus makes at the instant once for all, the pres. *I restore fourfold* seems rather to designate a rule of conduct already admitted and long practised by him. It is unnatural to apply it to a measure which would relate only to some special cases of injustice to be repaired in the future. '*Iδού, behold,*' is in keeping with the unexpected revelation, so far as the public are concerned, in this rule of

Zaccheus, till then unknown by all, and which he now reveals only to shew the injustice of those murmurs with which the course of Jesus is met. ‘Thou hast not brought contempt on Thyself by accepting me as Thy host, publican though I am ; and it is no ill-gotten gain with which I entertain Thee.’”

But we can only do justice to Godet’s work by letting him speak for himself more at length and on higher themes. How fine, then, is the passage (Vol. I. pp. 224, 5) in which he explains the service done to Christ by the Temptation in the Wilderness, shews how it fitted in with the plan of God concerning Him, how it was even an essential factor in the discipline by which He was trained for the Messianic function, and thus vindicates, while he expounds, the words, “Then was he led, *by the Spirit*, to be tempted of the devil.” After shewing that the three temptations addressed to the Lord Jesus were designed to arouse in Him (1) a painful sense of the contrast between the abundance due to his Divine greatness and the miserable destitution in which He found Himself; (2) to provoke Him to win universal empire by a sudden exhibition of Divine power rather than by a patient manifestation of the Divine character; and (3), to presume on the favour and love of which the Voice from Heaven had just assured Him, Godet continues :

“The Temptation is the complement of the Baptism. It is the *negative* preparation of Jesus for his ministry, as the baptism was his *positive* preparation. In his baptism Jesus received impulse, calling, strength. By the temptation He was made distinctly conscious of the errors to be shunned and the perils to be feared, on the right hand and on the left. The temptation was the last act of his moral education ; it gave Him an insight into all the ways in which his Messianic work could possibly be marred. If, from the very first step in his arduous career, Jesus kept the path marked out by God’s will without deviation, change, or hesitancy, this bold front and steadfast perseverance are certainly due to his experience of the temptation. All the wrong

courses possible to Him were thenceforth known ; all the rocks had been observed : and it was the enemy himself who had rendered Him this service. And it was for this reason that God apparently delivered Him for a brief time into his power. This is just what Matthew's narrative expresses so forcibly : 'He was led up by the Spirit . . . . to be tempted.' When He left this school, Jesus distinctly understood that, as respects his *person*, no act of his ministry was to have any tendency to lift it out of his human condition ; that, as to his *work*, it was to be in no way assimilated to the action of the powers of this world ; and that in the *employment* of Divine power, filial liberty was never to become caprice, not even under a pretext of blind trust in the help of God. And this programme was carried out. His material wants were supplied by the gifts of charity (Chap. viii. 3), not by miracles ; his mode of life was nothing else than a perpetual humiliation—a prolongation, so to speak, of his incarnation. When labouring to establish his kingdom, He unhesitatingly refused the aid of human power,—as, for instance, when the multitude wished to make Him a king (John vi. 15) ; and his ministry assumed the character of an exclusively spiritual conquest. He abstained, lastly, from every miracle which had not for its immediate design the revelation of moral perfection, that is to say, of the glory of his Father (Luke xi. 29). These supreme rules of the Messianic activity were all learned in that school of trial through which God caused Him to pass in the Desert."

As a final specimen of this admirable work I cite a passage in which Godet may be seen in his *militant* attitude, contending with the adversaries of the Faith, only regretting that the requirements of space will not allow the whole of his dissertation on the Resurrection to be given, but only what he has to say on the *Fact*, and the *Design*, of the Resurrection :

"The Apostles bore witness to the resurrection of Jesus, and on this testimony founded the Church. Such is the indubitable historical fact. Yet more : they did not do this as *impostors*. Strauss acknowledges this. And Volkmar, in his mystical language, goes the length of saying, 'It is one of the most certain facts in the history of humanity that, shortly after his death on the cross, Jesus appeared to the Apostles, risen from the dead, however we may understand the fact, which is without analogy in history.' Let us seek the explanation of the fact.

"Did Jesus return to life from a state of *lethargy*, as Schleiermacher thought ? Strauss has once for all executed justice on this hypothesis.

It cannot even be maintained without destroying the moral character of our Lord.

" Were those appearances of Jesus to the first believers only *visions* resulting from their exalted state of mind? This is the hypothesis which Strauss, followed by nearly all modern rationalism, substitutes for that of Schleiermacher. This explanation breaks down before the following facts :

" 1. The Apostles did not in the least expect the body of Jesus to be restored to life. They confounded the Resurrection, as Weizäcker says, with the Parousia. Now such hallucinations would suppose, on the contrary, a lively expectation of the bodily reappearance of Jesus.

" 2. So far was the imagination of the Disciples from creating the sensible presence of Jesus, that at the first they did not recognize Him (Mary Magdalene, the Two of Emmaus). Jesus was certainly not to them an expected person, whose image was conceived in their own soul.

" 3. We can imagine the possibility of a hallucination in one person, but not in two, twelve, and finally five hundred ! especially if it be remembered that in the appearance described we have not to do with a simple luminous figure floating between heaven and earth, but with a person performing positive acts and uttering exact statements, which were heard by the witnesses. Or is the truth of the different accounts to be suspected? But they formed, from the beginning, during the lifetime of the Apostles and first witnesses, the substance of the public preaching, of the received tradition (1 Cor. xv.). Thus we should be thrown back on the hypothesis of imposture.

" 4. The empty tomb and the disappearance of the body remain inexplicable. If, as the narratives allege, the body remained in the hands of Jesus' friends, the testimony which they gave to its resurrection is an imposture, a hypothesis already discarded. If it remained in the hands of the Jews, how did they not by this mode of conviction overthrow the testimony of the Apostles? Their mouths would have been closed much more effectually in this way than by scourging them. We shall not enter into the discussion of all Strauss's expedients to escape from this dilemma. They betray the spirit of special pleading, and can only appear to the unprejudiced mind in the light of subterfuges. But Strauss attempts to take the offensive. Starting from Paul's enumeration of the various appearances (1 Cor. xv.), he reasons thus : Paul himself had a *vision* on the way to Damascus ; now he put all the appearances which the Apostles had on the same platform ; therefore they are all nothing but visions. His reasoning is a mere sophism. If Strauss means that Paul himself *regarded* the appearance which had converted him as a simple vision, it is easy to refute him. For what Paul wishes to demonstrate, 1 Cor. xv., is the *bodily* resurrection of believers, which he cannot do by means of the appearances of Jesus,

unless he regards them all as bodily, the one as well as the other. If Strauss means, on the contrary, that the Damascus appearance *was* really nothing else than a vision, though Paul took it as a reality, the conclusion which he draws from this mistake of Paul's, as to the meaning which must be given to all the others, has not the least logical value.

"Or, finally, could God have permitted the *spirit* of the glorified Jesus, manifesting itself to the Disciples, to produce effects in them similar to those which a perception by the senses would have produced? So Weisse and Lotze think. Keim has also declared for this hypothesis in his 'Life of Jesus.' But (1), what then of the narratives in which we see the Risen One seeking to demonstrate to the Apostles that He is not a *pure spirit*? (Luke xxiv. 37-40.) They are pure inventions, audacious falsehoods. (2) As to this glorified Jesus, who appeared spiritually to the Apostles, did He or did He not mean to produce on them the impression that He was present bodily? If He did, this heavenly Being was an impostor. If not, He must have been very unskilful in his manifestations. In both cases, He is the author of the mis-understanding which gave rise to the false testimony given involuntarily by the Apostles. (3) The empty tomb remains unexplained on this hypothesis, as well as on the preceding. Keim has added nothing to what his predecessors have advanced to solve this difficulty. In reality there is but one sufficient account to be given of the empty tomb: the tomb was found empty because He who had been laid there Himself rose from it."

His exposition of *the design* of the ten appearances of the risen Jesus, recorded in the New Testament Scriptures, is no less admirable than his defence of *the fact of the Resurrection*.

"In the first three, Jesus comforts and raises, for He has to do with downcast hearts: He comforts Mary Magdalene, who seeks his lost body; He raises Peter after his fall; He reanimates the hope of the Two going to Emmaus. Thereafter, in the following three, He establishes the faith of his future witnesses in the decisive fact of his resurrection; He fulfils this mission toward the Apostles in general, and toward Thomas; and He reconstitutes the apostolate by returning to its head. In the seventh and eighth appearances He impresses on the apostolate that powerful missionary impulse which lasts still, and He adds James to the Disciples specially with a view to the mission for Israel. In the last two, finally, He completes the preceding commands by some special instructions (not to leave Jerusalem, to wait for the Spirit, &c.), and bids them his last farewell; then, shortly afterward, He calls Paul specially with a view to the Gentiles. This unity, so profoundly psychological, so holily organic, is not the work

of any of the Evangelists, for its elements are scattered over the four accounts. The wisdom and love of Christ are its only authors."

I have been anxious that, so far as was possible in the few pages at my command, Godet should be allowed to speak for himself; and though the quotations from his Commentary have been necessarily few and brief, I hope they may suffice to indicate its worth. But every student must be aware that the worth of any work on which much thought and labour have been expended can only be faintly indicated by a few short citations from it; and therefore I may be permitted to add that this Commentary has been in my hands for some time, and that I have never consulted it on any point without receiving from it some valuable criticism or suggestion.

EDITOR.

# THE EXPOSITOR.

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## *THE BOOK OF RUTH.*

### I.—THE SOJOURN IN MOAB.

*Chapter 1, verses 1–5.*

THE Book of Ruth was, as we have seen, probably written in the time of David, that is some century and a half after the events narrated in the Book occurred. The opening sentence of the Book shews that the Author was going back for his story to a past age. He speaks of “the days when the Judges judged” as over and gone. He is as obviously telling the story of a bygone time as an author of the present day would be were he to open with the sentence, “Now it came to pass in the days when men travelled by coaches and waggons.” And, probably, he indicates the days of the Judges as the date of his story in order to remind us that in those days, as there was no settled order of government, “every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” Elimelech might go and come as he pleased, there being no authority to restrain him.

The home of Elimelech was in Bethlehem—“Bethlehem-judah,” as the historian is careful to remark, in order to distinguish it from another

Bethlehem in the territory of the tribe of Zebulon. Now Bethlehem-in-Judah was "remarkably well watered in comparison with other parts of Palestine."<sup>1</sup> The pastures of its limestone downs were famous for their fine rich grass, and its valleys were covered over with corn. Its very name—Bethlehem, i.e., *House of Bread*—indicates its fertility. And, therefore, the famine which drove Elimelech from Bethlehem must have been extraordinarily protracted and severe; even the most wealthy and fertile parts of the land must have been consumed by drought: there was no bread even in the very "House of Bread."

Elimelech and his family were by no means likely to be the first to feel the pinch of want, or to feel it most keenly; for he came of a good stock, of a family that stood high in the tribe of Judah, and was a man of consideration and wealth. When his sorely bereaved widow returned to her native place, "*all the city were moved about her*," as about some well-known person once held in general repute, and cried, "*This Naomi!*" She herself confesses, "*I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty*," evidently contrasting her present penury with her former opulence. The kinsmen of Elimelech, Boaz and that unnamed kinsman who declined to redeem his inheritance, were men conspicuous for high character and large possessions. So that we have every reason to believe that Elimelech was a man well endowed and in good esteem. The probability is that he was rich in flocks and herds, a master shepherd such as Beth-

<sup>1</sup> Ritter's "Comparative Geography of Palestine."

lehem has constantly produced ; and that it was to find pastures for his famishing flocks that he went to sojourn in Moab.

His own name, and the names of his wife and children, confirm this conclusion. For *Elimelech* is compounded of *El* = God, and *melech* = King; and means "My God is my King;" and Hebrew scholars have noted that all names compounded with *melech* are borne by distinguished persons. *Naomi*, or *Noomi*, means "the lovely, or gracious, one." *Mahlon* and *Chilion* probably mean "joy" and "ornament." And as we know that the Hebrew names were commonly expressive of character, and in the earlier ages even prophetic of character, we may perhaps infer from these names that the father was a kingly kind of man, the mother a lovely and gracious woman, and the two boys the very pride and joy of their parents' hearts.

They are all expressly called "*Ephrathites* of Bethlehem-judah." *Ephrathah* was the ancient name of the district in which Bethlehem stood; and probably the word denotes the fruitfulness of this district as insured by its abundance of water,---*Euphrates* and *Ephrathah* seem to be kindred words. *Ephrathites*, then, are *natives* of the city or district as distinguished from mere sojourners or residents ; *born* Bethlehemites, and not men of other districts who had come to settle in it : and possibly the antique word may also here convey an intimation that Elimelech belonged to one of the *ancient* and well-born families of the district.

So that, on the whole, we may conceive of Elimelech as a native of the fertile district of Bethlehem,

a member of an ancient, noble, and distinguished family, a man of substance and mark, with a lovely wife and two bright promising sons fast rising into manhood.

This man, pinched by famine and fearing to lose his wealth, resolved to emigrate to the Field of Moab, which, untouched by drought, was green with grass and wealthy with corn. But why did he select *Moab*? The usual resort of the clans of Canaan and its vicinity in time of famine was Egypt. Why, then, did not Elimelech, like his great forefathers, either go or send down into Egypt for corn?

The probability is that he would have sent or gone if the road to Egypt had not been closed. All the notes of time in the Book imply that it was while the venerable but miserable Eli was Judge that Elimelech resolved to leave his ancestral fields: and while Eli was Judge there was perpetual war with Philistia. When the Philistines heard that the tribes of Israel were oppressed by famine, they would be sure to guard the high road to Egypt, in order to prevent their famishing foes from procuring supplies from the vast public granaries of that opulent and powerful empire.

With the way to Egypt stopped, Elimelech would naturally turn to the Field of Moab; for Moab had much to attract both the farmer and the shepherd. The name “*Moab*” stands in the Bible for three districts on the east of the Dead Sea; but we can tell in which of these it was that Elimelech found a home and a grave, for one of these districts is expressly called “*The Field of Moab*,”—which is the

technical phrase used throughout this Book—while another was called “The *Land* of Moab,” and a third “The *Dry*,”—*i.e.*, the Dry Canton—“of Moab.” This district or canton—“The Field of Moab,” or Moab proper—has the precipices which border the Dead Sea on its western limit, a semi-circular sweep of hills on the east, behind which lies the Arabian Desert; on the north it is defended by the tremendous chasm down which the river Arnon foams: while on the south the two ranges between which it lies run together, meet, and shut it in. It was a high table-land, dotted with cities, on which the grass grew sweet and strong; and it has been in all ages, as it is even now, a favourite haunt of pastoral tribes.

The prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, who evidently knew Moab and the Moabites well, give us a graphic and artistic sketch of them. In their “burdens,” or “dooms,” the men of Moab “appear as high-spirited, wealthy, numerous, and even to a certain extent civilized, enjoying a wide reputation and popularity. With a metaphor which well expresses at once the pastoral wealth of the country and its commanding, almost regal, position, but which cannot be conveyed in a translation, Moab is depicted as the strong sceptre, the beautiful staff, whose fracture will be bewailed by all about him, and by all who know him. In his cities we discern ‘a great multitude’ of people living in ‘glory’ and in the enjoyment of great ‘treasure,’ crowding the public squares, the housetops, and the ascents and descents of the numerous high places and sanctuaries, where the ‘priests and princes’ of Chemosh, or Baal-peor, minister to the anxious

devotees. Outside the towns lie the ‘plentiful fields,’ luxuriant as the renowned Carmel, and the vineyards and gardens of ‘summer fruits;’ the harvest is being reaped and the ‘hay stored in abundance,’ the vineyards and presses are crowded with peasants gathering and treading the grapes, the land resounds with the joyful shouts of the vintagers.”<sup>1</sup>

The Moabites, moreover, were of kin to the Israelites; for, while the men of Israel were the sons of Abraham, the men of Moab were descendants of his nephew Lot: and, though there was often war between the two nations, and war as bitter as kinsmen’s quarrels commonly are, at least in the intervals of peace very friendly relations were often maintained between individual members or families of the two races.

Here, then, in the pastoral canton of Moab—which, though it plays a great part in ancient history, is hardly so large as the shire of Huntingdon, and is not so far from Bethlehem as Huntingdon from London—Elimelech might hope to find a good pasture for his flocks and herds, if only he were able to purchase it, as no doubt he was, and would receive the welcome which awaits the “full,” or wealthy, sojourner in almost every land.

Was it *wrong* of him to abandon his native land, in order to sojourn with Moab until the famine was past? No doubt, it was wrong. Not that emigration is a sin, or even emigration to an alien, and sometimes hostile, land. We, perhaps, are better pleased to hear of Englishmen migrating to one of

<sup>1</sup> George Grove, in Smith’s “Dictionary of the Bible,” art. *Moab*.

our English colonies than to hear of them sailing to a land in which the English name is, or may be, held in suspicion and dislike. But who would say that it was *wrong* for an English family, on the compulsion of some strong motive, to settle in France, or Spain, or America? What made it wrong for Elimelech to migrate to Moab, wrong according to the Hebrew standard, was that he was abandoning his place among the elect people, to sojourn among heathen whose social life, whose very worship, was unutterably licentious and degrading. If it were right of *him* to abandon his place, it would not have been wrong for all Bethlhem, nay, for all Judah; and then how could the Divine purpose concerning Israel have taken effect? Elimelech was a wealthier man than many of his neighbours; and if *they* could bear the brunt of famine rather than forsake the land of their fathers and expose their children to the seductions of heathen license, why could not he? True, he is not directly blamed for his error in the Book of Ruth, which is written in the most considerate and generous tone throughout; but that the writer of the Book thought him to blame, and held the calamities which fell on him and his house to be a judgment on his sin, there is scarcely room to doubt.

What these calamities were we are told in verses 3-5. Elimelech lost his life while seeking a livelihood, and found a grave where he had sought a home. And, apparently, this "judgment" fell on him at once, judgment treading on the very heels of offence. Before his sons were married, he was taken away from the evil to come. For we can

hardly doubt that it would have seemed evil to him that his sons should marry strange women, women of a race of which God had said, “Thou shalt make no covenant with them : and thou shalt not make marriage with them ; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto their son, nor shalt thou take their daughter for thy son ; for it would turn away thy children from me, and they will serve false gods.”<sup>1</sup> The sin of these young men in marrying strange women is not expressly denounced as a sin in the Story, any more than that of their father in forsaking the land of promise, although it is denounced in the Targum, which commences verse 4 thus : “*They transgressed the commandment of the Lord*, and took foreign wives from among the daughters of Moab.” But no one can read the Old Testament without feeling that they sinned against the Hebrew law : for, among the Hebrews, marriage was regarded as a religious covenant ; and St. Paul does but utter the national conviction when he asks, “What fellowship has light with darkness, or Belial with God ?” The reason of the law is given in the passage just cited from Deuteronomy,—“they will turn away thy children from me, and they will serve false gods.”

The daughters of Moab were specially obnoxious to the faithful Israelites. They appear to have been among the most fascinating, and the most wanton and profligate, women of antiquity. Their gods—Chemosh, Moloch, Baal-peor—were incarnations of lust and cruelty. They demanded human sacrifices. Children were cast into their burning arms. In their ritual sensuality was accounted piety. True, Mahlon

<sup>1</sup> Deut. vii. 2, ff.

and Chilion were exceptionally fortunate in their wives. *They* were not turned to the service of false gods, though there was grave reason to fear that they might be ; but, on the other hand, neither did they turn their wives to the service of the only true God. It was not till after her husband's death that Ruth learned to take shelter under the wings of the Lord God of Israel (Chap. ii., ver. 12) ; and Orpah, as we are expressly told (Chap. i. ver. 15), "went back to her people and *her gods*."

Nevertheless, the home of Naomi in the Field of Moab seems to have been a very happy, although it was not by any means a prosperous, home. Gradually, as the years passed, the widow and sons of Elimelech appear to have lost all that they had, so that at her return to Bethlehem Naomi came back "empty." But, for once, love did not fly out of the window as poverty stept in at the door ; for Naomi prays (Chap. i. ver. 6) that the Lord will deal kindly with Ruth and Orpah, because *they had dealt kindly with the dead and with her*. *Orpah*, probably, means "*hind*," and *Ruth* "*rose*,"—pretty and pleasant names both, denoting grace and fragrant beauty. Mahlon and Chilion mean "*joy*" and "*ornament*." So that at the head of the diminished household we have the lovely and gracious Naomi ; and then "*Joy*" has for wife the beautiful and fragrant "*Rose*," and "*Ornament*" the graceful "*Hind*." The very names are idyllic, and seem to indicate, what the facts confirm, that the household was a singularly pure and happy one, characterized by a certain rustic grace and refinement.

But "Death strikes with equal foot the rustic

cottage and the palaces of kings." And after ten years, in which the members of this notable family seem to have opposed a constant face to the austere and threatening brow of Misfortune, and to have grown the dearer to each other for the sorrows and calamities they shared together, Mahlon and Chilion, still young men, followed their father to the grave, and Naomi was left a childless widow. Songs of mirth were exchanged for songs of mourning. The three men of the household had gone to their long home, and the three bereaved women were left to weep together and to comfort each other as best they might.

Thus far the Book of Ruth resembles that Symphony of Beethoven's, in which the songs of birds, the cheerful hum of a holiday crowd, and all the pleasant voices of a rustic merry-making, are hushed by the crash of a sudden and threatening storm.

The fact that both Ruth and Orpah were minded to accompany the destitute Naomi, when she returned to her native city, confirms all that has been said of the pure and happy family life of the household into which they had been admitted. Mahlon and Chilion must have been men of worth and character to win so sincere and stedfast an affection from these two daughters of Moab. And the gracious Naomi must have carried herself both wisely and graciously to these young wives, or she would not have inspired them with a love so devoted and self-sacrificing. And yet, when once they had breathed the pure atmosphere of a Hebrew home, it is no marvel that Ruth and Orpah were reluctant to lose it. To the

men of Moab women were but toys to be played with while they retained their charm, and to be cast aside so soon as some brighter toy took the eye. But in ancient Israel, as happily also in modern England, the worship of God was, as a rule, conjoined with a pure domestic life, a life made pure and sweet by chastity and kindness, by respect for women, by love for children. No doubt Ruth and Orpah were profoundly impressed by the purity and fidelity which distinguished the Hebrew from the Moabitish home, and repaid it with tenderness and a grateful attachment to the family into which they had been welcomed. It speaks well for them that, after living with them for ten years and watching with motherly jealousy how they bore themselves to her sons, Naomi can thank them with impassioned sincerity and tenderness for their "kindness" to the dead and to her.

Their kindness to *her* is even more remarkable, perhaps, than their kindness to their husbands; for the ancient combine with modern authors to complain of the unhappy relations which obtain between the daughter- and the mother-in-law, and in laying the blame of it on the latter. "The mother-in-law has forgotten that *she* was ever a daughter-in-law," says an old German proverb. Terence laments that all mothers-in-law have ever hated their son's wives; and Juvenal affirms that "domestic concord is impossible, so long as the mother-in-law lives." And, no doubt, among selfish people, who confound jealousy with love, the relation is apt to be a source of irritation and discord; the mother is loth to relinquish her rights in her son, and the wife is forward to

assert her rights in her husband : both are apt to forget that their common love for the same person should draw them together and make them of one heart and mind. But in lands where the home-life is pure and tender, and among persons of an unselfish and generous nature, even this relation becomes a very happy one. And, possibly, we may accept it as the weightiest testimony to the tenderness and purity of domestic life among the better Hebrews, that both the prophet Micah (Chap. vii. ver. 6) and our Lord Himself (Luke xii. 53) imply that the tie between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law was as close and sacred as that between mother and daughter, or father and son ; that both affirm it to be one of the last signs of utter social division and corruption when the daughter-in-law rises up against her mother-in-law. “ Happy is the nation that is in such a case.” For men labour, as well as fight, for hearth and altar as for nothing else ; and when the hearth is itself an altar, when the home is bright and sacred with a Divine Presence and law, then indeed there is no place like home.

## II.—THE RETURN TO BETHLEHEM.

*Chapter I, verses 6–22.*

Than the scene depicted in these verses there is hardly any more beautiful and affecting in the whole range of the Old Testament Scriptures. All three actors in it are admirable, and are admirably portrayed. Even Orpah shews a love and a devotion which command our respect, although her love did

not rise to the full heroic pitch ; while of Ruth and Naomi it is hard to say which is the more admirable,—Naomi, in putting from her her sole comfort and stay, or Ruth, in leaving all that she had to become the stay and comfort of Naomi's declining years. The exquisite and pathetic beauty of the scene has been recognized from of old, and has inspired painter after painter, musician after musician : while Ruth's famous reply to Naomi's dissuasive entreaties takes high rank among the sentences which the world will not willingly let die.

It is not an easy, nor is it an altogether pleasant, task to break up this pathetic Story into its separate sentences that we may analyse them and see what they mean and imply ; but it is a necessary task : for only as we trace out the meaning of the separate sentences can we hope to reconstruct the Story with fuller knowledge and permit it to make its due impression upon us.

Whether Elimelech and his wife felt that they were entering on a doubtful course when they left the Holy Land to sojourn with the heathen of Moab, we have no means of knowing. But we have much reason to think that, during her ten years' sojourn in the Field of Moab, Naomi came to regard it as a sinful course. The loss, first, of her husband, and, then, of her sons, came upon her as a Divine rebuke ; and as she laid her sons, cut off in their prime, in an alien grave, the thought and purpose of return, return to God as well as to the land of God, seem to have taken possession of her heart. This purpose was probably strengthened both by the hope that, in her poverty and bereavement, she

would receive help and comfort from her wealthy Hebrew kinsmen, and, still more, by the happy tidings, which now reached her, that the famine was at an end, that the valleys of Bethlehem were once more covered over with corn and its hills with flocks. In the fine Hebrew phrase, "*The Lord had remembered his people, to give them bread.*" The pious Hebrew saw God in all things. What we call "the bounty of Nature" was, for him, the immediate gift of God. His bread came straight from Heaven, though it came through the processes of husbandry and the benignity of the seasons, and shewed that God was thinking, and thinking graciously, of him. And when the fields yielded no food, and the flock was cut off from the fold and the ox from the stall, *that* was because God had "forgotten" him. Not that the pious Israelite conceived of God as losing sight of him in the vastness of his empire and the multiplicity of his cares. What he meant by God's forgetting him was that God was offended with him for his sins, was ceasing to be gracious to him, had purposely put him out of his mind, and was therefore refusing to make his fields and toils fruitful to him. He believed, what we too much forget, that Nature is instinct with a Divine Presence; that it rises into life and fruitfulness when that Presence is auspicious, and sinks into sterility and death when that Presence is clouded with sorrow and indignation at the sins of men. When the Lord "*remembered*" his people, *i.e.*, when He saw with pleasure that they were doing righteousness and shewing mercy, then He gave them bread. When He turned away from their bold affronts against his righteous

and loving Will, then famine and disaster stalked through the land.

In this sense God had forgotten Israel for ten years. And, no doubt, the calamities which signified his displeasure with them produced their usual effect,— inducing humility and penitence. Now, therefore, He remembers them, and once more the land smiles with plenty. And now that He is once more gracious, may there not be grace and a blessing even for the impoverished and afflicted Naomi, if she too returns to Him and once more takes shelter under his wings? Perchance, there may. At all events she will put Him to the proof. And so she starts on her homeward way.

But she does not start alone. Her two daughters-in-law resolve to accompany her. She, apparently, is not aware of their intention, and supposes they have only come to see her off and indulge in a last embrace, although they regarded themselves as already on the way to the land of Judah (ver. 7). When, therefore, they reach the Ford of the Arnon, on the northern boundary of the Field of Moab, or, perhaps, when they reach the Fords of the Jordan, the eastern boundary of Judah, Naomi bids them return each to her mother's house, and prays both that the Lord will deal kindly with them, as they have dealt with her dead and with her, and that He will grant that they may each find "an asylum" in the house of a new husband. As she clasps them in a parting embrace, they lift up their voices and weep. They protest, "Nay, but we will return with thee unto thy people." And, now, Naomi has the delicate difficult task of breaking to them, as gently

as she may, the sad secret that, if they go with her, they will find no welcome from her people, no kindness from any but herself.

If we would understand the scene, and especially the stress laid on these young widows finding new husbands, we must remember that in the East of antiquity, as in many Eastern lands to this day, the position of an unmarried woman, whether maid or widow, was a very unhappy and perilous one. Only in the house of a husband could a woman be sure of respect and protection. Hence the Hebrews spoke of the husband's house as a woman's "*menuchah*," or "rest"—her secure and happy asylum from servitude, neglect, license. It was such an "asylum" of honour and freedom that Naomi desired for Orpah and Ruth. But, as she had to explain to them, such an "asylum," while it might be open to them in Moab, would be fast closed against them in Judah. In marrying them her sons had sinned against the Hebrew law. That sin was not likely to be repeated by Israelites living in their own land. Yet how is Naomi to tell them of this fatal separation between the two races? how is she to make these loving women aware that, if they carry out their resolve to go with her, they must resign all hope of honour and regard?

She discharges her difficult task with infinite delicacy. They, of course, had no thought of marrying any sons that might hereafter be born to the widowed Naomi. Such a thought could not possibly have entered their minds. Why, then, does Naomi lay such emphasis on the utter unlikelihood of her having sons, and of their waiting for them even if

she should have them? Simply to convey to them that, if they went with her, *they would have no hope but in herself*. What she meant was: "I know and love you: and, had I sons, I would take you with me, that, in their homes, you might find the asylum every woman needs and craves. But I have none, nor am I likely to have any, nor could you wait for them if I had. And, outside my household, there is no prospect for you; for the men of Israel may not take to wife the daughters of Moab. Alas, it is more bitter for me to tell you this than for you to hear it. It is harder for me than for you that we must part. But the hand of the Lord is gone out against me. I have no hope for the future. I must walk my darkened path alone. But you, you may still find an asylum with the people of your own race. Your future may be bright. You will at least have one another. Go, then, and return each to her mother's house."

This, I apprehend, was what Naomi meant by the words which sound so strangely to us (vers. 11-13): this was what Ruth and Orpah would understand her to mean. And if we cannot wonder that the cheerless and perilous prospect was too much for Orpah's love, let us all the more admire the constancy of her whom even this prospect could not terrify. Ruth risked everything which a woman holds dear rather than leave her "mother" to walk and suffer alone. And it may be doubted whether in all the crowded records of womanly heroism and self-sacrifice we anywhere meet a courage and devotion surpassing hers.

And yet, in this contest of self-sacrificing love it

is hard to tell whether the palm should be awarded to Ruth or to Naomi. Has not Naomi discharged her full duty of dissuasion in placing the discomforts and dangers of her lot before her daughter? She, at all events, thinks that she has not. When Orpah has kissed her and gone back, while Ruth is still "cleaving" to her, she renews her entreaties and dissuasions. "Thy sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; go thou also. It is not simply, or mainly, that we belong to different races: we worship different gods. It is *this* which really separates us, and makes it impossible that you should find an asylum in Judah. Return, then, after thy sister." When we consider how dark and solitary Naomi's path must have been had Ruth yielded to her entreaties, we cannot but feel that these two noble women were well matched, that it is hard to say in which of them love was the more generous and self-forgetting.

If, in the judgment of the world, Ruth carries off the palm, it is, in part, because we expect more of a mother in Israel than of a daughter of Moab: but it is still more, I think, in virtue of the exquisite and pathetic words in which her reply to the dissuasions of Naomi is couched. Her vow has stamped itself on the very heart of the world; and that, not because of the beauty of its form simply, though even in our English Version it sounds like a sweet and noble music, but because it expresses, in a worthy form and once for all, the utter devotion of a genuine and self-conquering love. It is the spirit which informs and breathes through these melodious words that makes them so precious to us, and that also

renders it impossible to utter any fitting comment on them. They shine most purely in their own light. "*Intreat me not to leave thee, nor to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge. Thy people is my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried. JEHOVAH do so to me and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.*" One wonders where the woman found breath to utter such words as these as she lay weeping on Naomi's breast, that her voice did not break into inarticulate sobs and sighs under the weight of so impassioned a tenderness.

I cannot pretend to interpret them, to dwell on them and bring out their beauty. Every heart must do that for itself. But three points should be noted by all who study them. (1) That, in these words, Ruth meets every dissuasive plea of Naomi's. Naomi has no home, no asylum, to offer her; and Ruth replies, "Where thou lodgest, I will lodge." Naomi reminds her that she is going among an alien people, who worship another God; and Ruth replies, "Thy people is my people, and thy God my God." Naomi urges that there will be no brightness, no *life*, in her life; and Ruth replies that she is content to die so that she may share Naomi's grave. (2) That Ruth adopts Naomi's God *as yet* purely from love of Naomi. And (3) that she shews how instantly and entirely she adopts Naomi's religion by sealing her vow with the Hebrew oath and by calling on the God of the Hebrews: "*Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.*"

When, from this impassioned invocation of the

Name of the Lord, Naomi perceives that Ruth is “stedfastly minded” to go with her, she ceases to dissuade her: and the two noble women, united in an indissoluble bond of love, go on their way side by side.

Fuller’s comment on verse 19 is: “Naomi was formerly *a woman of good quality and fashion*, of good rank and repute; otherwise her return in poverty had not so generally been taken notice of. Shrubs may be grubbed to the ground, and none miss them; but every one marks the falling of a cedar. Grovelling cottages may be levelled to the earth, and none observe them; but every traveller takes notice of the fall of a steeple. Let this comfort those to whom God hath given small possessions. Should He visit them with poverty, and take from them what little they have, yet their grief and shame would be the less; they should not have so many fingers pointing at them, so many eyes staring on them, so many words spoken of them; they might lurk in obscurity: it must be a Naomi, a person of eminency and estate, whose poverty must move a whole city.” In these days we should hardly think of calling Naomi “a woman of good quality and fashion;” but Fuller’s inference from the general excitement caused by her return is, on the whole, a fair one, though it is somewhat quaintly worded. She must have been a woman of substance and repute about whom all Bethlehem was moved. Their exclamation, “*This Naomi!*” expresses the general astonishment at the change which had passed upon her. No doubt the little hamlet had been all aflame with gossip when, ten years before, the rich sheep-master, Elimelech,

had left it, and many pious brows had been shaken over his sin in going to sojourn among the heathen. And, no doubt, on Naomi's return, many who would have shared that sin if they could, and many who had committed far worse sins than any of which she had been guilty, once more shook their heads in grave rebuke, and were forward to recognize the judgments of an offended God in the calamities which had befallen her. It may be feared that there was more blame than pity in the ejaculation, “*This Naomi!*”

Naomi confesses both the impoverishing change that had passed upon her and the sin of which she had become conscious, and is more than ever conscious now that she sees it reflected from the rebuking faces of her former neighbours. The passionate exclamation with which she meets their wonder and reproach is full of pathos. “Call me not Naomi, but call me *Mara* (‘bitter’), for the Almighty hath dealt very *bitterly* with me!” Life is no more pleasant to me, but full of bitterness. Call me, then, by a new name answering to my new condition, a name as bitter as my afflictions. There is, too, a strange blending of sadness and generosity in her confession: “I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home empty. . . . The Lord hath testified against me; the Almighty hath afflicted me.” For while, like her neighbours, she feels the humbling contrast between her former wealth—wealth of happiness and of hope as well as of possessions—and her present poor and unfriended condition, she also feels that it was *because* she went away when she was full that she has been

brought home empty. She attributes her “emptiness” to the Lord, but her going away to herself alone. *That* was not the Lord’s doing; it was a sin against his will. Nor was it the doing of Elimelech and her sons: at least she casts none of the blame of it on them, although, in all probability, it was they who decided to go, and she had but followed their wishes or command. She takes the whole blame on herself. She confesses that, in leaving “the land of the promise,” she was walking after her own will, not the will of God. But, though she confesses her own sin, she utters no reproach against the beloved dead. “I went because it was my will to go; and now God has taught me, by all I have suffered and lost, that it was wrong to go. He has justly emptied me of all my possessions, all my hopes.”

The whole city was moved at her return; but no one seems to have been moved by her penitence and grief. She is left alone, save for “Ruth, *the Moabitess*” (verse 22), as the sacred historian once more calls her, to bring out the contrast between the tenderness of this heathen outcast and the austerity of the pious Hebrews of Bethlehem.

Thus far, then, the Story is sad enough: it is a story of loss, of shame, of sore bereavement; and but for the fidelity of Ruth we should leave Naomi—in her native place, too, and among her kin—alone, deeming herself forsaken of God and afflicted, because she saw herself abandoned and despised of men. Even the first Chapter of the Book, however, does not close without a hint of brighter days in store. Love and fidelity are always acceptable to

God. And hence we might infer that the love and fidelity of Ruth would, in due time, meet with their reward. But we are not left to inference and conjecture. The last verse of the Chapter tells us that it was "*in the beginning of barley-harvest*" that Naomi and Ruth came to Bethlehem. And we know that, before the harvest was over, the mercy of God to these two loving women rejoiced over the judgments with which He had afflicted them. It was in the harvest-field that Ruth met Boaz, and with Boaz that "asylum" of honour and freedom which Naomi had thought it impossible for her to meet among the sons of Israel. The night of weeping is passed ; a morning of joy is about to break upon them. How, and how wonderfully, this new day dawned on their sad but faithful hearts we shall see as we study the succeeding Chapters of the Book.

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## THE PROLOGUE OF ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL.

## II.—THE LOGOS.

THE three questions which we have to answer are these : Whence did the Evangelist derive his notion of the Logos ? What is the origin of this unusual term ? What the motive which led to its employment here ?

First of all, it is of importance to establish one fact, that the Prologue does not contain a single thought which goes beyond the testimony of Christ in the Fourth Gospel and the teaching of the Old Testament read by this light. B. Weiss<sup>1</sup> mentions

<sup>1</sup> "Johanneischer Lehrbegriff," 1862.

two principal points in which the Prologue appears to him to go beyond the testimony of Christ: 1. The notion of the Word, by which John expresses the ante-historic existence of Christ; 2. The creative function which he attributes to this being. Weizsäcker<sup>1</sup> adds to these two points the pre-existence of Christ. This theologian can only make this at all plausible by distinguishing in the discourses of Jesus between what the Master really said and what must be put down to the Evangelist. That the discourses of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel contain the idea of his pre-existence is positively certain. "*What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?*" (vi. 62).—"Verily, verily I say unto you, *Before Abraham was born, I am*" (viii. 58).—"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (xvii. 5).—"For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (xvii. 24). Nobody thinks, at the present day, of disputing the natural meaning of such words. By frankly rejecting the authority of Scripture, existing Rationalism has at the same time set itself free from the sad necessity of weakening the force of its statements. This is one of the advantages of the present state of things.

Let us, in the first place, attentively compare the contents of the Prologue with the discourses of Christ in the Fourth Gospel.

The first two propositions of verse 1 follow directly from the words of Christ which we have just quoted. For where could the Word have been prior to the

<sup>1</sup> "Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie," t. vii., fourth edition.

creation, and when nothing as yet existed, if not with God? Jesus says Himself, "*With thee, before the world was.*" The third proposition, "*The Word was God,*" is only a corollary from the preceding propositions, and from the saying "*I am,*" in contrast with "*Before Abraham was born,*" literally, "*became.*" Jesus there expressly attributes to Himself the essence, the mode of being of Him who said, "*I am that I am.*" As to the creative function attributed to the Logos (verse 3), should it not be sufficient to recall the idea of the eternal and divine existence of the Logos contained in the words: "*Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world,*" to see that He who spoke thus could not have been a stranger to the work which brought the world out of nothing, and to discern in the plural of Gen. i. 26, "*Let us make,*" the fact affirmed by John of the participation of the Word in the creative act? The testimony of Jesus concerning Himself in the Fourth Gospel does not permit of our seeking his presence, in the first chapter of Genesis, anywhere else than in the very bosom of Elohim.

The other passages of the Prologue are no less certainly deductions from the discourses and acts of Jesus in the Gospel; verse 4: "*In him was life;*" comp. v. 26: "*For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;*" verse 9: "*That was the true Light;*" comp. viii. 12 and ix. 5: "*I am the light of the world;*" . . . . "*He that followeth me shall have the light of life;*" verse 7: "*John came to bear witness;*" comp. i. 34: "*And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God;*" v. 33: "*Ye sent unto John,*

and he bare witness to the truth." The Prologue expresses the important idea of the activity of the Logos within the theocracy and even amongst mankind at large, prior to his incarnation: verses 5 and 11. This idea is necessarily implied in what Jesus says, in chap. x., of the way in which the Shepherd's voice is *known* by his sheep, and this not only by those belonging to the fold of the old covenant (verse 3), but also by those who are not of this fold (verse 16), by those children of God, not belonging to the nation, which were scattered abroad throughout the world (xi. 52). As to the contrast between the birth of the flesh and being born of God, which fills such a prominent place in the Prologue (verse 13), it is taken from this saying of Jesus: "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*" (iii. 6). The reality of Christ's humanity is asserted in the Prologue no less strongly than his divinity: verse 14. In no Gospel, perhaps, so much as in the Fourth, is the human side of the Saviour's person and affections so fully brought out. He is worn with fatigue (iv. 6); He is thirsty (iv. 7); He weeps for his friend (xi. 35); He is moved, even troubled (iv. 33; xii. 27). At the same time, his earthly glory as the Only Begotten, so admirably set forth in the Prologue, is displayed in the Gospel in the perfectly *filial* character of all the manifestations of Jesus, both in word and deed; his complete dependence (vi. 38 *et seq.*); his absolute docility (v. 30, &c.); his unrestricted fellowship with the Father (v. 20); the greatness of the works which He receives power to do—to quicken, to judge (v. 21, 22); his perfect assurance of being

heard, whatever He might ask (xi. 41, 42); the worship which He accepts (xx. 28), which He even claims, as equal with the Father (v. 23). The testimony of John the Baptist cited in verse 15 is taken to the letter from the subsequent narrative (i. 27, 30). The idea of the gift of the law as a preparation for the Gospel (verse 17) appears also in v. 46, 47. The 18th verse, which closes the Prologue, is almost a verbal reproduction of vi. 46 : “*Not that any one hath seen the Father, save he which is of God: he hath seen the Father.*” Lastly, the terms *Son* and *only Son* are taken from vi. 40 : “*This is the will of the Father, that every one which seeth the Son;*” . . . . and iii. 16 (which John certainly puts into the mouth of Jesus) : “*God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son;*” and iii. 18 : “*Because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*”

If anything is demonstrable, it is, then, this fact, that the words attributed to Jesus in the narrative contain all the ideas expressed in the Prologue, or at least their immediate premisses. We cannot, with Weiss, except from this statement the idea of creation by the Word. There only remains now the term Logos chosen by John to characterize the Son. Unquestionably it is the employment of this philosophical term which has given occasion for the author of the Prologue to be regarded as a disciple of the Gnostics or of Philo, rather than as a simple disciple of his Master.

But all the expressions of which the Evangelist avails himself in the Prologue admit of a simply religious natural meaning, quite appropriate to the

context, whilst in Gnosticism they are employed in a forced, artificial, mythological sense.<sup>1</sup>

As to the Alexandrian School and Philo, no one at the present day fails to apprehend the fundamental and essential differences which separate them from John. M. Reuss<sup>2</sup> himself says : “ Modern authors who hold that the Logos of John is not the same as that of Philo are unquestionably right.” But he finds, nevertheless, “in the perfect similarity which exists between the expressions of the Apostle and those of philosophy” the proof of “a relation of dependence between the two systems, at least, as to their form and chronological succession.”

The chief differences which appear to us to exist between John and Philo, as far as the present subject is concerned, and which, notwithstanding the common use of the word *λόγος*, argue two different and even opposed doctrines, are these :<sup>3</sup>

I. They both make use of the word *λόγος*, but with totally different meanings. In John it signifies, as in the language of the Bible generally, *Word*. In Philo it has the philosophical sense of *reason*. It is, as

<sup>1</sup> Hilgenfeld finds in ζωή (verse 4) the mythological person who, with the Gnostics, was the syzygy of the Logos ; in *σκοτία* (verse 5) the principle eternally opposed to Light in the dualist system ; in the expression, *come into the world* (verse 9), an allusion to the time during which, according to the Valentinians, Jesus was preparing to receive into Himself the divine Logos ; in verses 12 and 13, the Gnostic principle that the believer only *becomes* what he already *is* by nature ; in the grace and truth (verse 14), a Valentinian syzygy, &c. These pretended discoveries will excite a smile at some future day, just as we are amused now by the allegorizings of the Fathers.

<sup>2</sup> “Hist. de la Théol Chrét.” t. ii. p. 354.

<sup>3</sup> Philo survived Jesus by at least ten years (Rénan, “Vie de Jésus,” p. ix.). His writings are therefore certainly older than the Gospel of John.

Grossman<sup>1</sup> says, "*Vis divina in ratione posita et universae naturae animo atque mente, divinæ mentis fusio universa.*" When Philo wishes to give to the term *λόγος* the sense of *word*, he expressly adds *ρῆμα*. "God makes one thing and another," he says, by his *λόγῳ ρῆματι*.<sup>2</sup> He attributes creation to the *ρῆμα θεου*.<sup>3</sup> The use of the word *λόγος* in St. John is in accordance, therefore, with the meaning of this expression in the LXX. and throughout Scripture, but in no way with its meaning in Philo.

2. The nature of the being thus designated is also conceived of in an entirely different manner by the two writers. The Logos of John is a person. "He is," says Baur, "a Divine being, existing for Himself, who is drawn, in some way, towards the heart of God, seeking to lose in unity that which separates and distinguishes Him from God. . . . This implies a consciousness in Him of his personal distinction."<sup>4</sup> The Logos of Philo possesses no real personality. Grossmann<sup>5</sup> says: "Just as the theology of Philo is made up of different elements, so the notion of the Divine Logos which we find in him assumes different colours, reflecting the different authors with whom he associates." Writing under the influence of Jewish documents, he calls the Logos the *archangel*. When he is explaining himself as a Platonist, he designates it the *idea of ideas* (*iδέα iδέων*). At other times, adopting the Stoic doctrine of the soul of the world, he describes it as the *impersonal*

<sup>1</sup> "Quæstiones Philoneæ," ii. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Hælemani, "De Evangelii Joh. Introitu," p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>4</sup> "Das Christ. und die Christl. K. der drei ersten Jahrb.," p. 323.

<sup>5</sup> "Quæst. Phil.," ii. 69.

reason diffused throughout all existences (*ὁ κοινὸς λόγος ὁ διὰ πάντων ἐρχόμενος*). Niedner also sums up his investigation of this question by saying: "There is not a passage which requires, whilst there are several which exclude, the hypostatical distinction of God from the Logos."<sup>1</sup> There is, therefore, no connection between this confused, indefinite, complex notion, the result of an evident syncretism, and the clear and original idea of the Word found in John.

3. The function of the Logos, in Philo, is confined to the creation and preservation of the universe. It never entered the thoughts of this philosopher to connect this being with the person of the Messiah, still less to identify them. In John, on the contrary, the idea of the Logos is only mentioned in view of his appearing as the Messiah, and of his incarnation.

. 4. Lastly, the origin of the two notions is altogether different. In Philo its origin is metaphysical. God being conceived of as an absolutely undefined and impersonal being, as pure existence, it was impossible to pass from such a being to the finite and infinitely varied creation ; and since this creation was a fact which had to be explained and harmonized with a rational conception of God, it was necessary to interpose an inferior agent, *a second God*, the Logos. In John the premisses are altogether different. God, so far from being an impersonal and abstract principle, is a Father (i. 18), whose essence is love (iii. 16). He is in direct relations with the world, since He loves and desires to save it. The

<sup>1</sup> "De subsistentiâ τῷ θεῷ λόγῳ apud Philonem tributa."—"Quæst. Phil.", ii. p. 3.

Logos of John is not, therefore, a mediator metaphysically necessary between God and the world. His existence belongs to the sphere of love (i. 18; xvii. 24), not of logical necessity.

Now is it possible to conceive two ideas more completely opposed than the God of Philo and the God of John, and, consequently, than their respective notions of the Logos? The two writers have nothing in common but the term, and even this they use in different senses. Let us hear no more of John's being of the school of Philo, or of Philo's disciples. Evidently his thought and even his vocabulary are derived from another source.

We have already observed that the term *λόγος*, and the conception involved in it, are the only things in the Prologue not derived directly from the discourses which St. John puts into the mouth of Christ. If he has not borrowed them either from this sacred source or from the philosophy of his time, whence did he get them? From his private conversations with his Master, or from some special revelation? It is impossible to say that he did not, but equally impossible to prove that he did, derive it from either of these sources. One thing, however, is certain, that this doctrine of the Creative Logos, who became our Saviour in Jesus Christ, had the same authority, in his eyes, as the teaching which he puts into the mouth of Jesus Himself. Otherwise, he would not have mixed it up, as he does in the Prologue, with the substance of that teaching. On the other hand, it is probable that he never heard this expression fall from the lips of his Master; or why, if it had been

derived from Him, should he have omitted it in his account of the discourses of Jesus? We are led, by this twofold consideration, to this result—that the notion of the Logos, although not directly forming part of the teaching of Jesus, had, nevertheless, exactly the same authority for the religious consciousness of John as the words of Jesus Himself. How is this fact to be explained?

Only in one way. In John's view, there existed an authority equal to his Master's, because it had been sanctioned by Him. This was the Old Testament; and it was from this source that John, following a path pointed out in the discourses of Jesus, obtained the notion of the Logos and even the very term. Three lines, in fact, in the Old Testament, converge towards the notion and towards the term for the meaning of which we are in search:

i. The appearances of the Angel of the Lord. In the Old Testament we find a Divine messenger (*Maleach*), sometimes distinct from Jehovah and sometimes identified with Him. Comp. Gen. xvi. 7: "*The angel of the Lord found her*," with xvi. 13: "*the Lord that spake unto her*." God says of this mysterious being (Exod. xxiii. 21), "*My name [that is to say, the knowledge and possession of my inmost hidden essence] is in him*." In Hosea xii. 4, 5, this being with whom Jacob wrestled, who (Gen. xxxii. 28-30) is called God (*El*), receives the names of *Elohim* and *Maleach*. In Zech. xii. 8 it is said that the house of David shall be *as Elohim*, and then, by way of climax, *as the angel of the Lord*. Lastly, in Mal. iii. 1 it is positively declared that the Messiah

will be none other than that person, at once Divine and distinct from God, who had long been worshipped in the temple at Jerusalem: "*The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger [Maleach] of the covenant whom ye delight in; behold, he cometh.*" In Zech. xii. 10, the Messiah, who is to be pierced by his people, is Jehovah Himself: "*They shall look on me, saith Jehovah, whom they have pierced.*" Thus, according to the Old Testament, this Divine Being, who was from the beginning the agent of all the theophanies, was to complete his mediatorial work by Himself fulfilling the functions of Messiah.

2. We may regard the description of *Wisdom* in Prov. viii. as certainly nothing more than a poetical personification of the Divine Intelligence. When combined, however, with the notion of the Angel of the Lord, this idea of Wisdom assumes the character of a real personality. "*The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old*" (verse 22). "*When he prepared the heavens, I was there*" (verse 27). "*Then I was with him as a worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him: rejoicing in the earth, and my delights were with the children of men*" (verses 30 and 31). The analogy of these expressions with those of the first four verses of the Prologue is obvious. What particularly characterizes this passage is the participation of Wisdom in the work of creation. This feature does not appear in the doctrine of the Maleach.

3. A third intermedium between God and the world to which the Old Testament still more fre-

quently attributes the greatest importance is the *Word of the Lord*. Its part commences with creation. Later on it becomes the ordinary agent of the prophetic revelations. There are some passages which tend to personify it. It is a physician sent from heaven to heal Israel (Psa. cvii, 20); a Divine messenger, who runs swiftly through the world (Psa. cxlvii. 15); an agent, who executes without fail the mission entrusted to him (Isa. lv. 11). After the Babylonish captivity, the Jewish doctors identified this living Word of God with the mysterious personage called the Angel of the Lord; and, combining into one view the theophanies, prophetic revelations, and manifestations of Jehovah generally, they attributed them to one and the same organ, which they called by the name of the Word of the Lord (*מִמְרָא דֵי יְהוָה*). They regarded this *Memra* as acting throughout the ancient economy, even where God alone is named. It was He who was with Joseph in prison. It is to the *Memra* that God says, in Psa. cx. 1: "*Sit thou on my right hand.*" He is the destroying Angel, and He dwells in the cloud in the desert. (See Lücke, t. i. p. 285.)

Of these three organs of Divine action and revelation,—the Maleach, Wisdom, and the Word,—the last was certainly the fittest to include and denote the other two. Owing to its intelligible contents, the Divine word is wisdom. Regarded as an act, it is a power, a personal agent, such as the Maleach was. There is, however, this difference between the term employed in the Chaldean paraphrases and that used by St. John, that the former always says *Memra of Jehovah*, whilst John says absolutely *the*

*Word.* Further, it is impossible to say whether, according to the notions of the Jewish doctors, there was any connection between what they called the Word of the Lord and the person of the Messiah.

We possess now all the elements required for the explanation of the notion and of the term Logos in the Prologue of John, without going away from the sphere of the theocratic revelations and forsaking that sacred soil in which the roots of the Apostle's religious thought and life were imbedded.<sup>1</sup>

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THE EPISTLES TO  
THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.

INTRODUCTORY (*concluded*).

THE words in which the writer of the Apocalypse describes himself, and the process by which the messages he is about to write came to him, are every way significant. "Tribulation" had come upon those Churches, and he was a "fellow-sharer" with them in the sufferings which it brought; but through the tribulation he and they were alike gaining their place "in the kingdom." He repeats, *i.e.*, the lesson which the Churches in that region had heard at the outset from St. Paul, that "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts xiv. 22). But he is their partner also in the patience or "endurance," not *of* (I follow the better reading), but "*in* Jesus." The thought expressed is not, as it is perhaps in 2 Thess. iii. 5 (if we accept our English rendering), that of "the patient waiting for

<sup>1</sup> A Dissertation from GODET'S "Commentary on the Gospel of St. John," translated from the French by the Rev. E. W. SHALDERS, B.A.

Christ," nor yet of a patience like that of which Christ had been the great example, but of an endurance which had its life and energy in union with Him. He goes on to tell how it was that he found himself in Patmos. He had proclaimed the Word of God ; he had borne his witness, and this was the result. It would help us but little in the work on which we have entered to picture to ourselves the rocks and shores of that island. With its scenery we have but small concern. The imagery of the visions that follow is all but entirely unaffected by the external surroundings of the seer. At the furthest, we can but think of the deep blue waters of the Mediterranean, now purple as wine, now green as emerald, flushing and flashing in the light like the hues on the plumage of a dove, opalescent and phosphorescent, according to the changes of sun and moonlight, as accustoming the Apostle's eye, and, through the eye, his thoughts, to impressions of splendours and glories—the rainbow round about the throne, and the sea of crystal mingled with fire—which we find it all but impossible to represent to the imagination, and which even he found it hard to express adequately in words.

And he was "in the Spirit, on the Lord's day." I cannot hesitate for a moment to accept the current explanation of the latter phrase, as meaning the first day of the week, the day of the Lord's Resurrection, the day also, let us remember, of the Lord's Supper. The adjective which in each case expresses the sacred character of the supper or the day was, so far as we can trace it, either coined by St. Paul, or for the first time taken out of colloquial into written use, as

applied to the former. It is found in no earlier writer. It seems probable that, fashioned as it was, to express a new thought and meet a new want, it spread rapidly among the Greek-speaking Churches, and its first extension would naturally be to the day on which the disciples in each Church met together to partake of the sacred meal to which it had been originally applied.<sup>1</sup> Let us think, then, what that day would be to the beloved disciple in his Patmos exile; how, absent from his flock in the body, he, at that hour of closest communion with them and with his Lord, would yet be with them in the spirit; how the very separation would throw him back more entirely upon the earlier memories of the day as that on which he had first beheld his Master as the conqueror of Hades and of Death. It was natural, if we may apply that term to the orderly sequence of spiritual phenomena, that such emotions should pass into ecstatic adoration, that the life of sense should be suspended, that he should be in the state of half-consciousness which St. Paul so well portrays, "Whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth" (2 Cor. xii.). In that trance-state so described, in which the man sees what others cannot see and hears voices which others cannot hear, and which, in this case at least, did not deprive the seer of the power of distinctly recording afterwards what had been thus made known, the messages to the Seven Churches were revealed to him.

The first impression made on the new conscious-

<sup>1</sup> The same word *κυριακός* is, according to a current, but not quite certain, etymology, the origin of Kirche, Kirk, Church, as being the Lord's house. "Cyriac," as a proper name, is another instance of its extension.

ness is that which is described as like the sound of "a great voice, as of a trumpet." It woke him out of the sleep that was the transition-stage between the lower and the higher life. Its sounds thrilled through brain and nerve, as will thrill one day the trump of the archangel. He heard the words, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last," of which he had already reproduced the echoes. He heard too, as if in answer to unuttered and unrecorded prayers, the words which told him that there were messages from that Eternal One to each of those Churches or communities of believers whose wants and perils had been as a burden on his soul. If his waking thoughts had travelled, as thoughts do travel at such times and under such conditions, to those portions of the flock of the Great Shepherd which he had so often visited, with which he had so often on the Lord's Day broken the bread and drunk of the cup of blessing, it must have been welcome tidings to him that he could preach to them a diviner word of counsel and reproof from his place of exile than he had done when he had been living and working in the midst of them. And then he turned and looked—and the vision that met his gaze was one of glory and majesty unspeakable. The "seven golden candlesticks" which he there beheld would at least remind him of the seven-branched candlestick which stood in the inner sanctuary (not the Holy of Holies) of the Tabernacle and the Temple. They had borne their witness there for centuries that God was Light, and that that Light revealed itself in manifold variety growing out of a central unity. In the vision of Zechariah—whose prophecy had, as we

have seen already, been much in the mind of St. John, suggesting imagery and phraseology—it had been seen, probably after the pattern of the lamp constructed at the time of the return from the Babylonian exile under Zerubbabel for the restored temple, as “a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof” (Zech. iv. 2). To make the symbol yet more complete, and adapted to what were then the pressing necessities of the time, he saw in his vision two olive-trees feeding from their branches, through two golden pipes, the bowl through which the lamps were kept burning. He learnt in the interpretation of the symbol that the two olive-trees were the two “sons of oil,” the two “anointed ones,” the representatives of priestly and of civil authority, Joshua and Zerubbabel, upon whom at that period the welfare of the nation’s life depended. The candlestick, or lamp, that was thus seen in the prophet’s vision, was probably identical in form with that which has become familiar to us as represented on the Arch of Titus, among the spoils of Jerusalem. Here, however, we have what seems at first a modification of the symbolism, almost a new symbol. The seer beholds not a lamp with seven branches, but seven distinct lamps. The ethical reason of the change is, perhaps, not far to seek. For him the lamp was the symbol not merely of the uncreated Light, but (so he had been taught by his Lord Himself) of a Christian society, as the channel through which that light was to be diffused through the world, a lamp set upon the lamp-shaft or pedestal (Matt. v. 15). What he

needed therefore was to bring out clearly the individuality of each such society, and this was done by the manner in which they were thus presented to his vision. If one were to endeavour to realize the vision as it were pictorially, it may have been that the Form which he beheld in the midst of the seven lamps stood in front of the central shaft, hiding it from view, and so leaving them to appear each in its own separate distinctness.

That Form he describes as like unto "the Son of man." Taken by themselves, and standing as they do without the article, the words might be translated simply, as in the great prophecy of Daniel (vii. 13), from which the title had been derived, "One like unto the Son of man," a form which, though arrayed in glory, was yet human. But the constant appropriation of the title by the Lord Jesus, its use by Him in the words which had stamped the expectation of his second Advent upon the minds of his disciples, forbid us to assign that lower meaning to it here. What the seer meant his readers to understand was, that he had seen the Master whom he had known and loved.

The description that follows lies obviously beyond the region of art. It is an attempt to portray thoughts and impressions which are almost, if not altogether, beyond the reach of words. The seer strives to represent a glory which has dazzled and confounded him. A human form, pervaded and clothed with light in all its purity, glorified and transfigured, so that what he had once beheld on the Mount of Transfiguration seemed to pale in memory before this greater brightness, this was

what he looked upon. It is important that we should remember that there had been that anticipation of the glory of the Son of man while He was yet on earth, that the seer who now beheld the vision had then been one of the eye-witnesses of his Majesty. It is not less important to remember how far it was now surpassed. The head and hair in their dazzling whiteness spoke at once of stainless purity and of the crown of glory of the Ancient of Days; the eyes seemed to burn into the soul with their fiery and searching gaze; the voice was like the sounds of many waters; even the feet, just shewn below the long robe that reached to the ankles, glowed with the same pervading brightness.<sup>1</sup> The other details of the manifestation are, however, more significant. The form of the Son of man is seen arrayed, not, as in the days of his ministry, in the short seamless tunic and the flowing cloak (the *χιτων* and *ἱμάτιον*, which were the common dress of the Jewish peasant), but in the long robe reaching to the feet, that had been the special garment of the High Priest. St. John uses, *i.e.*, the very word *ποδήρης*, which stood in the LXX. version of Exod. xxviii. 31, for the *Ephod* of Aaron. And he is girded with a golden girdle, not, as of one who toils

<sup>1</sup> It is not, I think, important for our purpose to discuss the mysterious *χαλκολίβανος*—the “fine brass” of the English Version. As this is the one passage in which it is found, its meaning must be more or less conjectural. I incline with Bleek to the view that it is a hybrid compound of the Greek *χαλκός* and the Hebrew “*labán*”—white. Such technical words were likely enough to be current in a population like that of Ephesus, consisting largely of workers in metal, some of whom, if we may judge from the case of Alexander the coppersmith (Acts xix. 34; 2 Tim. iv. 14), were without doubt Jews. I believe the word in question to have belonged to this technical vocabulary. It is, at any rate, used by St. John as familiar and intelligible to those for whom he wrote.

and runs, around the loins (comp. Luke xii. 35), but, as of one who had passed into the repose of sovereignty, around the breast. That the girdle should be of gold, as the symbol of that sovereignty, was almost a necessary consequence. In this combination of the received emblems of the two forms of rule there was set forth, in its simplest symbolism, that union of the kingly and the priestly offices, that revival of the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, which the argument of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews had by this time made more or less familiar. And in his hand He holds seven stars (verse 16). In what way they were seen as held by Him we are not told; but the symbolism is, I venture to think, far more suggestive if we think of them as shining as precious gems would shine if used as signet-rings, than if we picture to ourselves the seven stars as held in the palm of the hand, or suspended from it as a wreath.<sup>1</sup> Here, at least, there is the guiding precedent of the old prophetic language. Of one king of the house of David it had been said that though he were as the "signet upon the right hand" of Jehovah, he should be plucked from it and cast away (Jer. xxii. 24). Of another heir to the kingly succession of that house, the promise had been written, "I will take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, . . . . saith the Lord, and will make thee as a signet." To the Eastern mind no symbol

<sup>1</sup> If one may venture on representing to the eye the manner in which they were thus held, I would suggest that they were seen on the inner side of the open hand, arranged in an order like that of the seven stars in the constellation of Ursa Major. It may be noticed that Philo refers both to that constellation and the Pleiades as examples of the prominence of the mystic number even in the visible and material universe.

could more adequately express the preciousness of the angels of the Churches to Him who thus held them, the honour to which He had exalted them, the care with which He watched over them.

The character of the next symbol is less ambiguous—"Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword." The thought expressed is obviously that of the power of the Divine Judge to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart, and to punish those which were evil and deserved punishment. The sword was thus identical with "the word of the Lord" of the older prophets (Isa. xlix. 2), and of Heb. iv. 12, "sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow." Here, adopting the new nomenclature of the writer, we may call it "the word of *the Word*"—the spoken utterance of Him who Himself utters the mind and will of the Eternal Father. What the seer beheld in vision was the expression of the truth that the message he was about to record would be conveyed in keen and piercing words, cutting through the ulcers of the soul, cutting off the diseased members, laying bare the inmost organs of the inner life, slaying those who deserved slaughter; but also wounding to heal, even slaying that He might raise as from the dead. And therefore it was that the countenance which he beheld was "as the sun shining in his strength," bright and terrible to look upon, and yet the source of all life and joy. In the light of that countenance he and all men, if they walked in it, should see the light of life.

So it was in the immediate personal experience of the disciple. As though that sword had pierced his

soul, as though that light were too dazzling for mortal eye, he "fell at his feet as dead." And then from that death-like trance he was roused by a touch and by a word. "He laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not." We can hardly doubt that that touch must have recalled many an hour of loving and tender companionship in what seemed now as a remote past, when he had leant his head upon the Master's breast, and had felt the hand that told of sympathy and of love laid, in hours of sorrow and perplexity, upon his shoulder, or clasping his hand in the confidence of friendship. "Fear not;" that, too, had been often heard by the disciples on the Lake of Galilee (Matt. xiv. 27; John vi. 19), in the dark hours of night. It had been the cheering watchword of his call to be one of the fishers of men (Luke v. 10), one of the little flock which the Good Shepherd had deigned to take under his especial guardianship (Luke xii. 32). Then, for the most part, it was the thought of their Lord's presence that removed their fear, the presence of One who was then "despised and rejected of men," like themselves in the outward accidents of life. That which removed the greater fear now was the assurance which the word and the touch gave him that the glorified form on which he looked was one with the Son of man whom he had known and loved, one also with the Eternal Lord, One who had triumphed over death, the living One who had died, but was henceforth "alive for evermore." The word "Amen" which followed, so often used by our Lord during his earthly ministry, placed this assurance of his everlasting life, the source of all life to others,

on the level of the highest truths which He had been wont to seal with this emphatic affirmation.

And to this there was added the new proclamation, "I have the keys of death and of Hades" (I take the words in what appears to be their true order). What thoughts would those words raise in the mind of the hearer? What abiding truths do they set forth for us? He, we know, had heard his Master speak of "the gates of Hades" (Matt. xvi. 18). He had accepted the interpretation of the old Messianic psalm, which spoke of the soul of the Christ as not having been left in Hades. He must have known the faith of St. Peter, that in his descent into Hades his Lord had, in that unseen world, preached to the spirits in prison, who had once been disobedient (1 Pet. iii. 19), proclaiming his gospel to those that were dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit (1 Pet. iv. 6). He may have been familiar with the half-proverbial saying which appeared afterwards in the Targums and the Talmud, that the key of the grave was one of the four keys which the Eternal King committed to no ministering angel, but reserved exclusively in his own power and for his own use. In any case he knew, both from the language of the older prophets (Isa. xxii. 22), and from his Lord's promise to Peter (Matt. xvi. 18), that the key was the recognized symbol of supreme, though, it might be, delegated authority, of the power to open and shut, to admit and to exclude. In these words, therefore, he would hear the assurance that the shadowy realms on which men looked with terror, and which they peopled with all dark

imaginings, were in very deed subject to the rule of Him who, though He had tasted death for every man, was now alive for evermore. "Death and Hades"—these were familiar sounds, as the names of the two great enemies of mankind, the forces that opposed the fulfilment of God's purposes and the completion of his kingdom. Now he heard that they had been despoiled of their power to harm, as afterwards he was to hear that they would deliver up the dead that were in them, and that they themselves should be cast, together with those who were not found written in the Book of Life, into "the lake of fire" (Rev. xx. 13-15). That thought was the one adequate remedy for the fear of death through which, with hardly an exception, men had been all their life-time subject to bondage; for the secret of that fear was their want of faith that there also, in that unseen world, behind the veil, were to be traced the workings of an absolute Righteousness and an Everlasting Love.

The command that followed, "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things that shall be hereafter," was simple and clear enough. But as yet the inner meaning of the vision that he had looked on had not been made known to him, and it was the fitting sequel to the education through which his Lord had led him while on earth, explaining to him and to his brother disciples the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, which to others were veiled in parables, that here also, before he entered on the special task assigned him, he should be taught the meaning of the symbols of the seven stars that were in or on the right

hand of the Son of man, and of the seven golden candlesticks in the midst of which He stood. The seven stars were, he heard, "the angels of the seven churches."

The question — Who were meant by these "angels"? has received very different answers. On the one hand it has been urged that everywhere else throughout the Book "angels" are angels in the ordinary acceptation of the word, superhuman messengers and ministers of God; that the term is nowhere else applied in the New Testament, nor in early Patristic writings, to any officer or teacher in the Church; that the symbolism of the visions of Daniel, in which Persia and Grecia are represented by angels (Dan. x. 20, 21; xii. i.), who are as their princes and guardians, finds a natural parallel here. On the other hand it is urged that, even admitting, what it is hard to admit, that the language of Daniel is more than symbolic, and that there are round the Eternal Throne the guardian angels of nations, with the divided counsels and conflicting interests of the peoples committed to their care, the words that are addressed to the angels of the Churches are altogether inapplicable except to men of like passions with ourselves. They have laboured and not fainted, or they have to suffer even unto death, or they have left their first love, or they are neither cold nor hot, and are in peril of utter rejection. I follow accordingly the majority of commentators in identifying these angels with those whom we should call the bishops of the Churches, the chief presbyters, vested with authority over other presbyters, exercising control over all the Churches of what in

modern phrase would be their diocese, the city and its suburbs committed to their care.

But the question comes why these chief presbyters were described here, and here only, by this new title; and the answer is to be found, I believe, in the special phenomena of that transition period of the apostolic age to which we have referred the book before us. In the earlier organization, the names of bishop and elder were, as is well known, interchangeable,<sup>1</sup> and the Apostles occupied a position more or less analogous to that of the bishops of later date. But at the time when St. John wrote, the personal care of St. Paul had been withdrawn from the Asiatic Churches, and had been delegated to one specially sent by him, like Timotheus, to act on his behalf in appointing, reprobating, or deposing elders. What title was to be given to this new officer, this Vicar-Apostolic of the primitive Church? The term "bishop" had not yet risen to the higher level in which it implied a superiority to presbyter. The name of Apostle, as applied to those who had been called and chosen by Christ Himself, was too high. In its other sense, as used of those who were simply the "messengers" of the Churches (2 Cor. viii. 2, 3), it was too low. The word "angels" might well commend itself at such a time as fitted to indicate the office for which the received terminology of the Church offered no adequate expression. Over and above its ordinary use, it had been applied by the prophet whose writings had been brought into a new promi-

<sup>1</sup> It is hardly necessary to prove an admitted fact, but a reference to the following passages will shew the equivalence of the two terms: Acts 17, 28; Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 1, 8; Tit. i. 5, 7; 1 Pet. v. 1, 2.

nence by the ministry of the Baptist, to himself as a prophet (Mal. i. 1), to the priests of Israel (Mal. ii. 7), to the forerunner of the Lord (Mal. iii. 1). It had been used of those whom, in a lower sense, the Lord had sent to prepare his way before Him (Luke ix. 52), and whose work stood on the same level as that of the Seventy. Here then seemed to be that which met the want. So far as it reminded men of its higher sense, it testified that the servants of God who had been called to this special office were to "lead on earth an angel's life;" that they, both in the liturgical and the ministerial aspects of their work, were to be as those who in both senses were ministering spirits in heaven. It helped also—and this may well have commended it—to bring the language of the Revelation into harmony with that of the great apocalyptic work of the Old Testament, the prophecy of Daniel. On the other hand, we need not wonder that it did not take a prominent place in the vocabulary of the Church. The old associations of the word were too dominant, the difficulty of distinguishing the new from the old too great, to allow of its being generally accepted. It was enough that it answered, as now, a special purpose.

That these bishop-angels of the Churches should be represented by the symbol of the stars, must have seemed, as soon as the key was once given, to be simple and natural enough. They too were set in the firmament of heaven, of the kingdom of heaven, to give light upon the earth. "Their sound had gone into all the earth" (so St. Paul had interpreted the words of the noblest of the Psalms of nature, which referred in their original meaning to the

voiceless witness of the stars), “and their words unto the ends of the world” (Rom. x. 18). And for those to whom these messages were sent, the fact that they were as stars in the right hand of Christ was at once solemnizing and strengthening. They were not what they were, or where they were, by chance. In the hand of Christ, subject to his power, but sustained also by his strength, safe so long as they continued there, shining in their unclouded brightness; in danger, if they strayed from his protection, to be as the “wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever”—this was and is a thought of comfort and of awe for all those who were successors to their office and sharers in their responsibilities.

Of the symbolism of the candlesticks, or lamps, I have already spoken. All that need be added here is that which grows out of the connection of the two symbols. The stars shine, each in its brightness and its beauty, and if true to the light given them, will shine for ever as gems upon the right hand of the Lord of the Churches. But to give light to those that are in the house, to diffuse the knowledge of the truth by word and yet more by act, to derive their power thus to let their light shine before men from Him who gives the oil, without which the light would be extinguished, these attributes of the life of the Church were better represented by the lamps that shed their rays through the surrounding darkness. That the Lord was seen in the midst of them was a witness that they too were subject to his rule, and were not exempted from his care.

## THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

## CHAPTER I. VERSES 8-17.

THE "commandment" of which St. Paul has spoken, "the preceptive aspect" of the entire revelation of God, leads him to concede<sup>1</sup> that there is a deep sense in which "the law" in its technical significance "is good." This is not a reply to those who, on Gnostic principles, held a diametrically opposite opinion, but simply the utterance of a profound truth lying at the root of all religion. The Law is the revelation of the divine ideal of man. It is God's portrait of the Son of man, of the Second Man before his incarnation. It is therefore beautiful, excellent, invaluable, holy, just, and good.<sup>2</sup> Its inward nature must be exquisite, genuine, worthy of recognition. If the Law be (*kalos*) "good" it must reflect the agreeable, the satisfactory, the beautiful impression made by what is good in itself. *The law is good, should a man—i.e., a teacher of the Law—make use of it lawfully—i.e., in harmony with its true spirit and intention.* It must not be transformed into a "*gospel*"; it must not be arbitrarily expanded or curtailed; the mere possession of it must not be made into a ground of acceptance, though it may be wisely regarded as a spur to obedience and a stimulant to conscience. If we would see its real beauty, we must use it in a manner that is congruous with the Divine intention which was conspicuous in its first utterance. The

<sup>1</sup> Heinrichs translates 'οἴδαμεν δὲ, concedimus. Ellicott admits a species of concession to be conveyed by the particle δὲ in this place.

<sup>2</sup> Καλὸς, as well as ἀγαθός, is often the translation in the LXX. of the *tōn* of the O.T. Cf. Cremer's "Biblico-Theological Lexicon," p. 338.

teacher of the Law, moreover, must, if he would thus use it “ lawfully,” be well aware, must, indeed, have already come to the conclusion, that such *law is not enacted for the righteous man; but, &c.*

Now before we can interpret this difficult clause, it is requisite to look forward to verse 11, and take into consideration an assertion of immense significance ; which in our opinion, though placed at the end, qualifies the entire foregoing sentence. Different expositors have referred the clause,—according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed (happy) God wherewith I have been entrusted, differently ; some have taken the phrase as qualifying the verb rendered, *is contrary to* ; and others have supposed that the sound healthy doctrine thus contravened is that which is said to be in harmony with the gospel of God’s glory. Great names can be quoted for both references, but the clause stands out prominently, and gives, as it appears to me, a distinctly Pauline force to the entire statement, as soon as we recognise the fact (with De Wette, Huther, and Ellicott) that according to the gospel of the glory of the happy God, it is true that no law is enacted for one who, having come under the saving power of that gospel, is “righteous” in God’s sight.

This is partially true of all earthly laws and of their sanctions. The lawless man is of all men the least free. He has to face at every turn the clashing force of a Will that is mightier than his ungovernable passion or his inexcusable neglect. The officers and executors and terrors of the law do not exist for a man who is in harmony with the order of society and with the constitution under which he lives.

In the case of the justified and sanctified man this is mere conspicuous, and the secret of the gospel assures him that the Law is not enacted for him, just because for him that Law has been transfigured into love. The Law is written on his heart, and embodied in his life.

The passage before us has been greatly contested in the schools, and often misinterpreted. Paul's own teaching furnishes the key. He said to the Romans (vi. 14) : "Sin shall not exercise any lordship over you, *because* you are *not under the law*, but under grace." And multitudes are "*under the law*" still. All those who are not "*righteous*" in the light of the Gospel, and not "*righteous*" on the condition of faith, are still "*under the law*" both of restrictions and ordinances. The heathen world is still "*under the law*." The disciples of Christ who have never surrendered themselves to the mystery of his love are still "*under the law*." The child needs a definite rule, the obstinate slave needs a penal sanction ; but of the man who "*walks with God*," who is not continuing in sin, who is crucified with Christ and alive again in the power of the Holy Ghost, it may be confidently asserted that he is not "*under the law*," and that the Law is not enacted for his advantage or his governance. But the difficulty arises, Why should the Apostle exaggerate the offences which are condemned by the ten commandments ? Why, when indicating those for whom law is still enacted, does he deepen the horror and pile up the agony of disgust with which the transgressor of the Law should be regarded ? This is not an easy question to answer; but, first, let us examine the terms themselves.

The “lawless” and “insubordinate,” the “ungodly” and “sinners,” head the list of those for whom the law *is* enacted. Now ἀνόμοις, translated “lawless” here, does undoubtedly signify, in 1 Cor. ix. 21 and in its adverbial form in Rom. ii. 12, those who are unblessed by written law; but the argument of the latter passage is to shew that these are really under an unwritten law, which is inscribed on their hearts. In the majority of cases the word is used to denote those who do set divine law at defiance. The same idea is involved in the usage of the noun ἀνομία.<sup>1</sup> The second word (*ἀνηποτάκτοις*) is supposed by Tittmann and Leo (but not by Huther or Ellicott) to have special reference to those who trample upon human law and resist constituted authority. Though it is one of the terms peculiar to the Pastoral Epistles, there is little difficulty in assigning to it the general meaning of “those who recognize no higher will than their own.”

The “ungodly”—*i.e.*, irreligious and profane—and the “sinner” are specially contrasted in 1 Pet. iv. 18 with the “righteous” man, with one who is justified in the sight of God. The four terms denote those who are living in open defiance of the great laws of the first table, to whom the name of God suggests no humbling awe, and the will of God no trembling trust. The idea is put even more vigorously in the next pair of terms (*ἀνοσίοις καὶ βεβήλοις*). The idea of ὁσίος differs somewhat from that of ἄγιος, in that it represents the inward personal purity of mind which will lead to a separation from sin, and to a refusal of the solicitations to evil. *Ἄγιος* involves specially an

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 2 Thess. ii. 8; Mark xv. 28; Matt. vii. 23; Rom. vi. 19.

actual definite non-commission of impure actions. A man may be *ἀγέρων*, without being either *ἅγιος* or *ἄγιος*. The word used here denying holiness in the deepest sense implies that the Apostle is speaking of defilement of mind ; while “profane” men would trample under foot all spiritual things, would scoff at the name, the glory, the temple, the worship, the rest, and the service of the living God.

At this point the Apostle advances to an exaggerated form of the transgression of the fifth commandment. It has been perceived by many that the E. V. has strained the significance of the word beyond its fair usage.<sup>1</sup> What is said is that the Law is enacted for those utter barbarians who injuriously and roughly treat their parents. In *men-stealers* the worst kind of theft is referred to ; and in *sodomites*, the foulest transgression of the seventh commandment. In *liars and perjurors* the most fearful forms of *false witness against a neighbour* ; for it is untruthfulness which endeavours to deceive God, as well as man, and to abuse infinite power and righteousness by calling them to aid the devil’s lie.

It has been thought by some that Paul, by this terrible enumeration of sins and sinners in phraseology not literally borrowed from the Mosaic law, resolved to shew that the Law would not be evaded by merely keeping to its letter, and that God’s written law *à fortiori* condemned forms of vice against which the universal conscience had explicitly pronounced.

My own conviction is that Paul here is aiming to

<sup>1</sup> Plato, “Phædo.” c. 62, and other writers use it in a milder sense than *parricide* and *matricide*. Hesychius says it denotes “one who dishonours, smites, or slays his father.”

exhibit the gravity of all sin. As our Lord warned men against thoughts, glances, and wishes which were on the same line with overt transgressions, so Paul saw in irreverence for parents what was equivalent to brutal handling, and in adultery a defilement utterly unspeakable, and in all theft a violation of the image of God, and in falsehood a profanation of the name of Him whose promises were "all Yea and Amen." There is no relaxation of the standard of virtue by this mode of putting the claims of law. There is no weakening of the sanctions which condemn lesser forms of these transgressions. The breadth of the phrases used in the earlier portions of the sentence prevents this mistake being made; and the character of the vices which are denounced, from their prevalence in the Roman Empire, and independently of this bold and outspoken repudiation, might have been wilfully condoned by some reckless sympathizers with what was supposed to be Paul's doctrine. The Apostle sweeps out of the way any possible misconception by the comprehensive clause, *and if there be any other thing which contravenes sound doctrine.*

"Sound doctrine"<sup>1</sup> is, as I have already remarked, one of the special phrases which have been singled out as symptomatic of a second-century style. But if any "doctrine" or "words" had already become prevalent which substituted sentimentality for morals—if any justification was then being formally offered for an Antinomian violation of equity, reverence, or purity; if this were being done in the name of a spurious or transcendental philosophy, or of a *doctrine*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. vi. 3; 2 Tim. i. 13; iv. 3; Titus i. 9, and ii. 8.

which was diseased at its very core and poisonous in all its working, there was at least propriety in Paul's speaking of a "healthy teaching" which aimed at moral perfection, at the beauty of holiness, at the power and principle of purity. Having once contrasted in his own mind the wise and healthy influence of a true faith with these sickly professions of a spurious anti-legalism, he was likely to repeat the phrase. It was a compendious expression for the use of Timothy and Titus, which would recall to their mind the lofty standard of excellence that emerged from a personal union with Christ.

The sense, then, of the whole passage is, the Law, according to the very idea of the "Gospel," is not enacted for the justified and sanctified man, but for all the lawless, for all who deliberately violate the spirit and letter of the written law; for all, in fact, who do not accept the full ethical force of the atoning love of God, and who do not submit to the spirit, to the example, to the commands of the Lord Jesus. That noble phrase, "According to the gospel of the glory of the happy God wherewith I have been entrusted," flashes its light back upon the prime idea and governing verb of the sentence; but it does not fail to bring into strong illumination "the doctrine that is according to godliness," the commandment the end of which is LOVE, out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned.

A few words must be added on the clause itself. The substantive, *δόξης*, is not quite equivalent to "glorious." Strictly speaking, the "Gospel" is defined as "the" gospel of the glory of "the blessed God." That God should be *μακάριος*—an epithet

repeated again in this Epistle (vi. 15)—is in grand opposition to the philosophical conception of the “impassive and unthinkable Essence,” the great unknown and unknowable “tendency” which some of our modern philosophers are borrowing from the Eleatics and Epicureans. That such a conception should be fathered on Prophets or Apostles is a wonderful *tour de force*. In Paul’s mind at least, God was in his own nature “blessed,” or “happy,” in the eternal repose and self-consciousness of his own Being, and in the manifestation of Himself to his creatures. That God should be “happy,” convinces us that his purposes and methods of mercy to man must, by their majesty, fulness, and beauty, overpower the evil of the universe, and sustain Him in bearing the awful burden of existence. The “blessedness” of God is the perfection of his “glory.” The knowledge and utterance of this glory is the Gospel. If we receive this message, and fully know that the Omniscient and Living, Loving, Righteous God is BLESSED, we are saved. With the message to us that comes from this glory of God’s blessedness Paul was “entrusted.”<sup>1</sup>

The connection between the foregoing passage and that which follows has been debated somewhat eagerly.<sup>2</sup> The probable spuriousness of the *kai* at the commencement of verse 12<sup>3</sup> renders the digression more conspicuous. Still, it is perfectly congruous

<sup>1</sup> On this Pauline usage, see Jelt’s “Greek Grammar,” 364. Cf. Rom. iii. 2; Gal. ii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Schleiermacher and De Wette say that the thread thus dropped is never taken up, and that there is no connection between verses 11 and 12.

<sup>3</sup> Tischendorf (eighth edition) has rejected it. See also Ellicott’s textual note.

with the Pauline style to expand a single hint which was ready to his hand, especially when the expansion involved such a reference to his own religious history as would beautifully illustrate the power of the Gospel to charm a sinner into the divine calm of holy obedience, and compel him by inward all-controlling power to loyal service.

Paul has just spoken of that Gospel with which he had been entrusted. The thought of the love and mercy which dictated this wondrous trust is the musical chord which vibrates to the inmost heart of the Apostle, and there peals immediately forth a sonorous note of praise.

*I give thanks<sup>1</sup> to him who has wrought mightily within me,<sup>2</sup> even Christ Jesus our Lord.* He does not refer to the external powers of the official Apostolate. Paul often speaks of this inward strengthening, and generally in reference to the invisible and Divine energy wielded by Christ in the soul of man. This is singularly explanatory of the superiority of the Gospel to the Law, as a sanctifying force.

*That (= because: the ὅτι introduces here the reason, the cause, of Paul's gratitude) he esteemed me faithful—or trustworthy—in obvious reference to the trust of which he had already spoken—in that he appointed me to ministerial service;*<sup>3</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> Cf., for this usage, Luke xvii. 9; 2 Tim. i. 3; Heb. xii. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Jelf, "Greek Grammar," § 468, obs. 6, compares this apposition of ideas with others in which the second clause defines more closely the significance of the first. Cf. Matt. xiv. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Here is an important illustration of the fact that the participial aorist does not always refer to a time antecedent to that of the principal verb. The appointment to ministerial service was not anterior to the gracious judgment here spoken of.

appointment being the proof that Christ did thus regard Paul.

"I received the truth," he cries, "*though formerly I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a doer of outrage.*" This self-accusation is thoroughly Pauline,<sup>1</sup> and the reference to his former career of antagonism to the Blessed Lord is a striking note of Pauline thought, for the remembrance haunted him like a spectre, though often the spectral memory transformed itself into the lustrous shining of a cloud when it reflects back the light which at one time it availed utterly to conceal. The terms used here are unusually strong, but justified by the declaration in the *Acts*, that Paul compelled others to "blaspheme" the holy name. It implies that he had warnings of conscience, which aggravated the sin of his ignorance. He who had seen Stephen die for Christ, and after this did not cease to pant like a wild beast for the blood of the Church, must have known that he had not been guilty of simply reviling men, but of blaspheming God.

The word *ὑβριστής* is used of "the doer of outrage."<sup>2</sup> The consideration which made the remembrance so bitter and the Divine forgiveness seem so wonderful, was that the real object of this contumelious conduct was the Lord Himself.

*: But notwithstanding all this, I received mercy,*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gal. i. 13; Phil. iii. 6; and the speeches in Acts xxii. 4; xxvi. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Archbishop Trench, "Synonyms of G. T.," compares it with *ἀλαζών* and *ὑπερίφανος*, the former of which shews the same spirit in *speech*, and the latter in *thought*, while our word here shews it in "upnish" and insolent deeds.

<sup>3</sup> From the reflective receptive sense of the middle voice of this verb *ἐλέω*, there arises the receptive sense of the I. aor. pass., *ηλεήθην*. Jelf, "Greek Grammar," § 364.

*seeing that, being ignorant, I acted in unbelief.* The ὅτι here does not state the ultimate cause or ground of the Divine mercy; but it introduces a consideration which modified his guilt and prevented his conduct from being an insuperable bar to forgiveness, which it might have become if it had been as ungodly and rebellious as it seemed.

There is no decision involved here on the "merit," or predisposing "congruity" in the virtues, of those who are as yet unbelievers, but there is a burning ray of light shot upon the degree to which ignorance modifies the culpability of unbelief. The passage does not stand alone. Christ prayed for his murderers: "Father, forgive them: they know not what they do." Elsewhere (1 Cor. ii. 7) St. Paul declares that "the princes of this world, *had they known it*, would not have crucified the Lord of glory;" and (Rom. x. 2) he says that his own loved Israel had "a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge." It is true that moral unbelief beclouds the judgment, and often obscures evidence, and hides the features of truth, and thus conduces to ignorance. Further, a certain amount of trust, of receptivity, of intellectual and moral surrender, is an antecedent to accurate knowledge; yet the higher acts of faith are dependent on lower degrees of knowledge. Man cannot be held responsible to the full for not believing that which he has never adequately understood, and there is an "ignorance" which greatly modifies the blameworthiness of "unbelief." Paul was a "blasphemer, persecutor, and doer of outrage," not because he hated the light: not that he was indifferent to the claims of God or to

the need of redemption, but because he was ignorant of the Lord whom he persecuted, and thought that he "ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." Such ignorance may entail fearful consequences and privations of privilege, but can never be judged at the bar of conscience with the condemnation passed on the unbelief of passion, self-indulgence, or wilful rebellion. Deliberate rejection of God as God, of Divine love when it is known to be Divine love, is the sin which in its very nature is "presumptuous," and apparently irremissible. But where the mind is too ignorant, or darkened or prejudiced to the force of evidence adequate under other circumstances, then the unbelief and practical disobedience which ensue, through the infinite mercy of God, do not exclude from hope. Thousands obtain mercy, seeing that they too act ignorantly in unbelief.

The strong and unusual word which Paul now uses, if we may judge from the force of similar verbal compounds elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> has a superlative force. Great emphasis is laid on the *superabundance*, the exceeding and boundless fulness of the grace that was lavished on him, and the preposition (*μετά*) expresses the accompaniments,<sup>2</sup> the subjective aspect of the grace, viz., *faith and love*, whose object and sphere were *in Christ Jesus*. Over and above the mercy which opened his eyes to the transcendent excellence of Christ, Divine grace had awakened faith and love in his heart, and transformed the persecutor into an apostle.

<sup>1</sup> ὑπερπλεόνασε. Cf. Rom. v. 20; viii. 37; 2 Cor. xi. 5; Phil. ii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> See for the like use *μετά*, Heb. xii. 17

*Verse 15.*—Then he quotes one of the “faithful sayings,” one of the musical and heaven-breathed utterances, which may possibly have been first poured forth in prophetic afflatus by himself, and which had been taken hold of as a watchword, treasured as a compendium of God’s truth, passed from lip to lip, from Church to Church, and land to land, as more precious than fine gold, more sacred than sacramental food, the patrimony of the Christian Household, the regalia of the Heavenly Commonwealth.

On several occasions Paul refers to the “faithful sayings.”<sup>1</sup> Once he is said by Luke to have quoted certain words of the Lord Jesus Himself (Acts xx. 35) with which the Ephesian elders were presumed to be familiar. And now he appeals to a sentence, and therefore to an underlying reality of transcendent interest, which he knew was “worthy of every kind of reception.”<sup>2</sup> That is, that every faculty of mind, heart, and will should be put in requisition to receive this truth; that every possible way in which acquiescence and admission could be yielded to the truth was amply deserved. Utterly, absolutely, universally trustworthy is the saying, the λόγος, that *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*. John would write in this same Ephesus, not long after: “*The Light which lighteth every man CAME into the world.*” Here, however, Paul anticipates his teaching, and deems it a “commonplace” of primitive Christian belief, that from a

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 1 Tim. iii. 1; iv. 9; 2 Tim. ii. 11; Tit. iii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> If the classical usage of πας with the article and noun is here followed, the above translation is necessary. Wettstein, however, translates, “Certissima res est et digna quam omni studio et cupide omnes complectentur probentque.”

pre-existent condition “Christ came into the world.” The phrase may be used of ordinary birth, but it is an awkward extravagance, unless more than human parentage and earthly development were being thought of. Christ continually used language which could not fail to have suggested the same idea. He *came* not so much to rule over Israel, or to enlighten the nations, as *to save sinners*. Let it be noticed, that Paul adopts the very term already used to denote compendiously all those for whom the Law was enacted. This is the word which (Gal. ii. 15) he had used as descriptive of the Gentile outcast, of the world beyond the reach of the Old Covenant of Promise, without hope and without God. Christ Jesus came into the world to *save* these. It is but a concentrated expression of the various words of Jesus, how “the Son of man had come not to destroy but to save.” What was involved in “salvation” is not stated, nor is the method of his grace. Paul assumes that “the saying” told its own story. He had personally found it the divinest truth. He even goes a step further, and says: “Of all sinners I am the chief or foremost.” Numerous have been the efforts made to take from this expression the obvious meaning belonging to it. Some have declared that Paul was, or must have been, a transmigrated appearance of Adam’s soul, and many of the Fathers endeavour to eviscerate the phrase of its force. It is interesting to find *Cornelius-a-Lapide* rejecting the interpretation of *Ambrose* and *Thomas Aquinas*, and making the wise suggestion that “Paul knew his own sins by experience and every other man’s *per*

*speculationem*, and they must have been to him the most aggravated of all sins." Francis of Assisi, and Bradford and John Bunyan, and many another saint of God, has confirmed the same interpretation of these memorable words. The like humility and self-knowledge which prompted Paul to say he was "not fit to be called an apostle," dictated this burning utterance: *Howbeit, for this cause, I obtained mercy, in order that*—the purpose of the Divine mercy towards him is very forcibly expressed—*in me, i.e., taking my whole nature as the sphere of its working, both in the depths of my being and in the whole of my destiny,—in me, the very foremost of sinners, not first in point of time, but chiefest in respect of conscious unworthiness, Christ Jesus, as the great agent of Divine grace, might illustrate for his own purposes<sup>1</sup> the whole extent and contents of his longsuffering.* The use of the article before ἀπασταν justifies this representation. "Longsuffering" (Trench) is generally used for patient and magnanimous conduct towards persons, while ὑπομονὴ is used of the quiet endurance of circumstances, sins, or events.

The object of this display of Divine forbearance in Paul was, *with the view of producing a typical representation of those who should hereafter believe upon him unto life eternal.* The preposition (*πρὸς*) has this causal force, introducing the object or result of the action of the verb. There is a slight deviation from Pauline phraseology in the use of the word "pattern," but it was justified by the connection.

<sup>1</sup> The word occurs eleven times in Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews in this sense. See Jelf's "Greek Grammar," section 363, for the reflexive force of the verb.

If Christ can save *him*, Paul feels He is able to save to the uttermost all who shall ever after believe on Him.

Then comes the sublime doxology which was ever burning in his heart and seeking expression on his lips. Paul was always ready for a song of praise, for a burst of glorious awe. *Now to the King of the ages*, of those ages of human history and Divine revelation which shadow forth and help us to conceive eternity, those "ages" which express infinite duration, all the cycles of both time and space; *to the Incorruptible, Invisible, Only God.*<sup>1</sup> These phrases are to be found elsewhere (Rom. i. 23; John i. 18). Mack, De Wette, and Ellicott attribute these perfections to GOD, rather than to the *King of the Ages*. Huther and Alford regard them as separate abstractions. The phrase is a grand testimony to the monotheism of Paul. The Godhead, the Trinity of his worship, is a sublime Unity. To this eternal, incorruptible One *be glory and honour unto the ages of the ages. Amen.* The sweep of the thought is vast, and the weight of it crushing, and the glory of it baffling. We have lost by familiarity of use the overwhelming awe that filled the soul of Paul when he realised his own salvation.

H. R. REYNOLDS.

\* *σοφῶ* is not in the best manuscripts.

*ZEHOVAN'S ANSWER TO JOB'S DOUBTS.*

JOB xxxviii.-xlii.

"THEN the Lord answered Job out of the tempest." *And what did He say?* The reply to that question has disappointed and perplexed even candid and thoughtful minds for more than a thousand years; it still perplexes and disappoints every earnest student of the Word. For when the only wise God speaks, we expect to hear the perfect utterance of a perfect wisdom; when He answers, we expect his answer to be complete, final, conclusive. But his answer to Job seems incomplete, illogical, inconclusive.

Driven from the peace of faith by the scourge of Calamity, Job passes through the agonies of doubt and fear, of wounded trust and love. In the excitement of his agony he gives the most varied and magnificent expression to the fluctuating passions of a heart torn from its rest, to the questions which we all ask but cannot answer, to the great moral problems which we all raise but cannot solve, when we are brought face to face with the mysteries of Providence and human life. His friends yield him no help, but simply aggravate the burden of his grief: as we follow them through the several cycles of the Poem, we cry with Job himself, "Miserable comforters are ye all!" we feel, as he felt, that they do but "darken counsel with words devoid of wisdom." Even Elihu has little help to give, and knows it. He convinces us, indeed, that Job was in the wrong in that he justified himself rather than God, and that his "friends" were still more hopelessly in the wrong.

in that they could not answer Job and yet condemned him. But "this wise young man," this earlier "Daniel come to judgment," cannot himself answer, though he will not condemn, Job; he feels that he has no adequate reply to the deep and awful problems in which the afflicted Patriarch is entangled. *He* is not the Light, but has come to bear witness to the Light; he cannot justify the ways of God to men: he can only prepare the way for the Lord, who, Himself, is coming to end and crown the argument.

As Elihu's eloquent rebukes draw to a close, our hearts grow full of expectation and hope. The mighty tempest in which Jehovah shrouds Himself sweeps up through the darkened heaven; it draws nearer and nearer; we "hear the tumult of his voice;" we are blinded by "the flash which He hurls to the ends of the earth:" our hearts "throb and leap out of their place,"<sup>1</sup> and we say, "God will speak, and there will be light." But God speaks, and there is no light. He does not answer one of the questions Job has asked, nor solve one of the problems Job has raised. He simply overwhelms us with his majesty. He causes his "glory" to pass before us. He claims to have all power in heaven and on earth, to be Lord of the day and of the night, of the tempest and of the calm. He simply asserts, what no one has denied, that all the processes of Nature and all the changes of Providence are his handiwork; that it is .. He who calleth forth the stars and determines their influences on the earth, He who sendeth rain and fruitful seasons, He who provideth food for the

<sup>1</sup> Job xxxvii. 1-5.

birds and beasts and gives them their beauty, their strength, and the manifold wise instincts by which they are preserved and multiplied. He does not utter a single word to relieve the mysteries of his Providence, to explain why the good suffer and the wicked prosper, why He permits our hearts to be so often torn by agonies of bereavement, of misgiving, of doubt. When the majestic Voice ceases we are no nearer than before to a solution of the haunting problems of life; we can only wonder that Job should sink in utter love and self-abasement before Him; we can only ask *what* it is that has thus shed calm, and order, and an invincible faith into his perturbed and doubting spirit. We say: "This beautiful Poem is a logical failure; it does not carry its profound theme to any satisfactory conclusion, nay, nor to *any* conclusion: it suggests doubts to which it makes no reply, problems that it does not even attempt to solve: after patient study of it, and with the keenest sense of its charm and power as a work of art, we are none the wiser for having studied it."

Most of those who have really read this Poem must have closed it with some such feeling as that which has just been expressed. Even those who hold it to be the most perfect and sublime poem with which man was ever inspired acknowledge that it does not explain the mysteries with which it undertakes to deal, that the answer of Jehovah is no true answer to the agonized questions and protest of Job. And we can only echo their acknowledgment. We admit that this marvellous Poem does not "assert eternal Providence" so as to satisfy the

intellect and "justify the ways of God to men." We admit that it suggests questions which it does not answer, and to which we know no answer, and problems which it does not solve, and to which we can find no solution save that of faith and trust and love.

1. But is it so certain as we sometimes think it to be that this Poem was *intended* to explain the mysteries of human life? is it certain that God meant it to answer the doubtful questions it suggests? is it certain even that a logical answer to these questions is either possible or desirable?

Let us at least remember that *all* the books which handle the theme of Job, even now that the true Light has come into the world, are equally unsatisfactory and disappointing to the logical intellect. From the "Confessions" of Augustine down to Dr. Newman's "History of my Religious Opinions," there have been hundreds of books that have professed to give the history of an inquisitive human spirit sounding its dim and perilous way across dark seas of Doubt to the clear rest and haven of Faith; but read which of these we may, we observe these two phenomena: first, that so long as the author sets forth the doubts and perplexities by which he has been exercised, we find his words instinct with life, and passion, and power; they commend themselves to our understanding and excite our sympathy; we feel that he is happily expressing thoughts and emotions which have often stirred within our own souls. But—and this is the second and more striking phenomenon—no sooner does he begin to tell us what it was that conquered his doubts, to describe

the several steps by which he climbed back to faith, to explain how much larger and firmer his faith now is than it was before it was tried ; no sooner does he enter on this climax of his work than—unless, indeed, we have passed through an experience similar to his—a thick bewildering haze settles down on his words ; we read them, but they are no longer instinct with life and force ; they do not commend themselves to our judgment, nor convince our reason. We cry in disappointment, “What, is that all ? What was there in *that* to induce faith ? The man has not fairly met one of his doubts, nor solved one of his problems ; he has simply evaded them, and crept, by an illogical bye-path, to a most lame and impotent conclusion.”

No man who, “perplexed in faith,” has read books of this class, hoping to find in them aids to faith and answers to doubt, can be an entire stranger to this sensation of disappointment and defeated hope. Written, as such books commonly are, by wise and good men, men of the most genuine sincerity and earnestness ; written, too, for the express purpose of leading the sceptical inquirer from doubt to faith, there is no one of them which does not disappoint us just as the Book of Job disappoints us. They may command our admiration ; they may touch our hearts ; but they do not satisfy our reason nor answer our doubts : they fail just at the one only point at which we are concerned for their success.

What should the fact teach us ? Surely it should teach us that the path of logic is not the path to faith. It should lead us to ask whether it may not be impossible to solve, in human words, and to the

human intellect, the mystery of God's dealings with men, whether, if possible, it would not be undesirable. Logic can do much, but not all. It may convince the reason, but it cannot bend the will or cleanse the heart. Prove to me, if proof be possible, that God is good in permitting pain and sorrow and loss to come upon me ; but if I do not *feel*, or want to feel, that He is good, and do not love Him for his goodness, mere proof will not do much for me. "*With the heart man believeth unto righteousness;*" and logic does not address itself to the heart. It is doubtful, even, whether the human intellect, at least while it is imprisoned in the flesh, could so comprehend the infinite providence of God as to prove its equity and kindness, or even understand the proof, if proof were to be had ; but it is very certain that, were such a proof within our reach, we might still distrust his goodness, and even hate it when it thwarted and pained us.

If proof were possible, if God could inspire and man could write an argument which should once for all interpret our life to us, which should solve all its problems and disperse every shade of mystery, it is still open to doubt whether it would be kind of God to inspire it ; or, rather, it is very certain that it would not be kind. For the mystery which encompasses us on every side is an educational force of the utmost value. We fret against it, indeed, and strive to be quit of it : and it is well that we do ; for it is this very strife and fret by which we are strengthened, by which our character is developed, and by which we are compelled to look up to Heaven for guidance and consolation. If we no longer had

any questions to ask, any problems to solve, if we saw the full meaning and final purpose of God's dealing with us, we should lose more than we should gain. With certainty we might be content; and we might rest in our content. But with mystery within us and on every side of us, compelling us to ask, "What does this mean? and that? and, above all, what does God mean by it all?" we lose the rest of content to gain a strife of thought which trains and educates us, which forever leads us onward and upward, and for which, in the end, we shall be all the wiser, and better, and happier. It may be, it surely is, inevitable that, with an infinite God over us, and around us, and within us, we, finite men, should be encompassed by mysteries we cannot fathom; that, if the mysteries which now perplex us were removed, they would only give place to mysteries still more profound. Even logic suggests so much as this. But quite apart from speculation, here stands the fact,—that it *is* part of God's scheme for our training that evil and pain should be in the world, that they should excite in us questions we should not otherwise have asked, and endeavours after freedom and holiness we should not otherwise have made. And God is wise. His scheme for us is at least likely to be better than any we could frame for ourselves. But if it be his scheme to educate us by the mysteries around us, and the questions and endeavours those mysteries excite, He can give us no book, no argument, no revelation which would dispel those mysteries; the craving intellect *must* be left unsatisfied in order that faith may have scope; the mental faculties must be perplexed both that

they themselves may be strengthened by exercise, and that the moral faculties, which are even more valuable and of a superior force, may be trained for their lofty task.

What is it that kindles and trains the intelligence of our children, that chastens their will and develops their moral qualities and powers? Is it not that a mysterious world lies all around them, a world in which things look differently from what they are and hold out another promise than that which they fulfil:—is it not *this* which for ever sets them asking questions which we can very hardly answer, and wondering over marvels which we perhaps have ceased to admire? Is it not the uncertainty as to what the next moment may bring or teach which makes their eyes bright with expectation and hope? Is it not because *we* often do that which they cannot comprehend, and even that which pains and disappoints and perplexes them,—is it not this which braces and enlarges their character and makes room for faith and trust and love? If we could condense all the wisdom of the world and of life into a tiny manual which they could master at an early age, should we venture to place it in their hands? If we did, we should simply rob them of their youth, of their keen enjoyment of the changes and surprises of life: imperfectly and by rote they would acquire what they now learn so much more truly and thoroughly and happily by experience and by efforts which strengthen and develop them. God teaches us, then, as we teach our children—by the mystery of life, by its illusions and contradictions, by its intermixtures of good with evil, of joy with sorrow;

by the questions we are compelled to ask even although we cannot answer them, by the problems we are compelled to study although we cannot solve them. And is not his way the best way?

2. We have seen how and why the Book of Job disappoints us, why the answer of Jehovah strikes us as of an insufficient logic. Can we now see how it came to pass that this insufficient logic was nevertheless sufficient for Job; how it was that this answer, which answered nothing to the intellect, satisfied him,—nay, swept away all his doubts and fears in the transport of gratitude and love into which it threw him?

We often *make* the difficulties over which we perplex ourselves in vain, and then look for answers everywhere but straight before our eyes. Thus, for instance, when we read that "Jehovah answered Job out of the tempest," we forthwith ask, "And what did He say?" expecting to hear some conclusive argument that will pour the light of eternal wisdom on the difficulties and perplexities of human life: we overlook the immense pathos and force of the fact, that *Jehovah spake to Job at all*. And yet, so soon as we think of it, it is easy to believe that, if Job had not understood a single word Jehovah uttered, the mere fact that Jehovah spoke to him would excite a rush of emotion before which all memory of his doubts and miseries would be carried away as with a flood. *This*, indeed, was that which Job had craved throughout. In how many forms does he cry, "O that God would meet me! O that He would speak to me! O that He would fix a day, however distant, in which to visit me and hear my

plea! O that He would even come to question and judge me!" The pain at the very heart of his pain was not that he had to suffer, but that in his sufferings God had forgotten and abandoned him. He could bear that God should "take" the children He had given. He could bear to receive "evil" at the Hand from which he had received so much good. He could even bear that his "friends" should forsake him in his calamity, that they should sit in judgment on him and condemn him of crimes which he knew he had not committed. What he could not bear was that *God* should abandon him, *abandon* as well as afflict him, that when he cried for pity or redress Heaven should not respond.

I have sinned!

Yet what have I done to Thee, O Thou Watcher of men?

Why hast Thou made me Thy target,

So that I am become a burden unto myself?

And why wilt Thou not pardon my transgression,

And cause my sin to pass away?<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \* \*

If it be that I have erred,  
My error rests with myself.

But if ye will magnify yourselves against me,

And urge against me my reproach,

Know ye that God hath wrested my cause,

And flung his net about me.

Bethold, I exclaim at my wrong, but am not answered;

I cry aloud, but there is no justice!

He hath fenced up my ways, so that I cannot pass,

And set darkness in my paths.

Have pity on me, have pity on me, O ye my friends!

For the hand of God hath touched me!

Why should ye persecute me, like God,

And not be satisfied with my pangs?<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> Chap. vii. vers. 20, 21.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xix. vers. 4-8, 21, 22.

Still is my complaint bitter,  
And my stroke heavier than my groaning.  
O that I knew where I might find Him !  
I would press even unto his seat ;  
I would set out my cause before Him,  
And fill my mouth with pleas :  
I should know the words with which He would answer me,  
And understand what He would say to me :  
Would He contend against me in the greatness of his strength ?  
Nay, He would make concessions to me :  
There might the upright reason with Him,  
And once for all I should be acquitted by my Judge.  
Behold, I go toward the East, but He is not there ;  
And Westward, but I cannot perceive Him ;  
Toward the North, where He is working, but I cannot see Him ;  
Where He veileth Himself in the South, but I cannot discern Him.

\* \* \* \*

O that I were as in months of old,  
As in the days when God kept me,  
When his lamp shone on my head,  
And by its light I walked through darkness ;  
As I was in my Autumn days,  
When the favour of God was on my tent ;  
When the Almighty was yet with me,  
And my children round about me.<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \* \*

I cry to Thee, and Thou answerest me not ;  
I stand up, and Thou eyest me :  
Thou art become very cruel to me,  
And dost press me hard with Thy strong hand :  
Thou hast caught me up and made me to ride on the blast,  
And causest me to evanish in the crash of the storm.  
I know : Thou wilt bring me to death,  
To the house of assembly for all living.  
Prayer is vain when He stretcheth forth his hand,  
When men cry out at calamity.  
Have not I wept with him whose day was hard ?  
Hath not my soul been grieved for the needy ?  
Yet when I waited for good, there came evil,  
And darkness when I looked for light !<sup>3</sup>

\* \* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xxiii. vers. 2-9.      <sup>2</sup> Chap. xxix. vers. 2-5.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. xxx. vers. 2026.

O that I had One who would hear me!—  
 Here is my signature!—that the Almighty would answer me!  
 That my Adversary would write his indictment!  
 Would I not carry it on my shoulder,  
 And bind it about me like a chaplet?  
 I would tell Him the very number of my steps,  
 I would draw near Him like a prince.<sup>1</sup>

Can we listen to these bitter sighs of a breaking heart and not feel what it was that was breaking it—that it was the cruel pain of *desertion*? Are they not but echoes and variations of the most terrible cry that ever broke on the air, “My God, my God, why hast *Thou* forsaken me?”

And if, now, through the tempest and the darkness, there should sound a Voice from heaven; if, however it came, the conviction should come to Job that the God he could not find had found him, and was speaking to him, would it matter very much what God said? Would it not be enough that it was God who was speaking, that the Divine Friend had come back to him, that He had never forgotten him, nor forsaken him; that He was in the tempest which had swept over him; that He had listened to him even when He did not answer Him, and had loved him even when He afflicted him? It was *this*—O, it was this—which dropped like balm into the torn and wounded heart of the sufferer: it was the resurrection of faith and hope and love in the rekindled sense of the Divine Presence and favour that raised him to a life in which doubt and fear had no place, a joy on which even repentance was no stain. Not what God said, but that God spoke to him and had come to him,—it was this which cast

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xxxi. vers. 35-37.

him in the dust, which quickened in him that humility which is man's true exaltation, and which constrained from him the happiest words he utters, although they sound so sad :

I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear,  
But now mine eye hath seen Thee :  
Wherefore I retract, and repent  
In dust and ashes.

And surely, it is this sense of an auspicious Divine Presence, that comes we know not how, before which *all* the darknesses of doubt flee away. It is an experience which lies beyond the scope of language. No man who has passed through it can explain it, or adequately express it in words, since words are incapable of fully rendering any of our deepest emotions. All we can say of it is, that it is not produced by logic, by argument, by answers nicely adapted to the questions we have asked or to the doubts on which we have brooded ; and that, as it did not spring from logic, so neither can it be expressed in logical forms. It is too deep for words to reach, too subtle and spiritual for words to hold.

If a difference has sprung up between two friends long and tenderly attached, are they ever reconciled by mere argument ? was it ever known that they *convinced* one another into renewed affection ? If the reconciliation comes, it comes from a sense of reviving or unaltered and unalterable love, which lies deep down in the heart beyond the reach of argument. No man could ever say why he loves, or tell what "love" means. "Love laughs at logic"; and if love for man or woman, why not love for God ?

3. Still the question recurs, “*What* was it that recovered Job to faith and trust and peace? Was there absolutely *nothing* in what Jehovah said to meet his doubts and answer his questions?”

Well, yes, there was something, though not much. There *is* an argument in the Divine Answer which may be reproduced in logical forms, though it is only an argument of hints and suggestions; it does not touch the profounder questions which Job had raised, nor would it be difficult to pick holes in it, if we took it simply as an argument addressed to the inquisitive and sceptical intellect. It does not go very deep. It is addressed to the heart rather than the brain, to faith rather than to doubt. It would not convince a sceptic, however reasonable and sincere he might be. Nothing would, or can, convince him save that sense of a Divine Presence and Love of which we have just spoken,—and *that* no argument can give.

Nevertheless, let us mark what the Divine Answer was viewed simply as an argument. Viewed thus, it met that painful sense of mystery which oppressed Job as he sat solitary and alone among his friends, and all the more alone because they were with him. One element in his pain was that he could not tell what God was aiming at, that the Divine Providence was all dark to him, that he could see no reason why a good man should be vexed with loss and misery and a bad man live out all his days in mirth and affluence. And this is a pain we have all felt, of which we should all be gladly rid. The injustice, the inequalities, the pains and degradations which enter into the human lot perplex and afflict us; we

can see no good reason for them: we cannot approve and vindicate them.

Does Jehovah, then, when He answers Job out of the tempest, answer the questions which this spectacle of human misery suggests? Does He assign a good reason, a sufficient motive, for the inequalities of the human lot? He does nothing of the kind. He does not lift an iota of that painful mystery. He simply teaches us that we should not let that mystery pain and perplex us, and hints that it may have a nobler motive and a happier end than we conceive. The argument of the Poem is Butler's argument—the argument from analogy. To the perplexed Patriarch, who sits brooding painfully over the dark problems of life, Jehovah points out that equally insoluble mysteries are over his head and under his feet; that he lives and moves and has his being amid them; that, look where he will, he cannot escape them: and that, as he finds them everywhere else, he should expect to find them in human life. Briefly put, taking only the argument which underlies its sublime poetry, the Divine Answer runs thus:—"You fret and despair over the one mystery which has been brought home to you by the pangs of sorrow and loss; you are perturbed because you cannot interpret it. But, see, there are mysteries everywhere; the whole universe is thick with them:—can you interpret these? Can you explain the creation of the world, the separation of land and sea, and the interwoven influences of the one on the other? Have you mastered all the secrets of light and darkness, of wind and rain, of snow and ice, of the migrations of birds, of the structure and instincts

of the beasts? Yet, instead of fretting over *these* mysteries, you accept and profit by them; you *use* sea and land, day and night, wind and rain, birds and beasts, and make them serve your turn. You live, content, amid a thousand other problems you cannot solve, and turn them to account. Should you not look, then, to find mysteries in the creature whom I have set over all other works of my hand—in man, and in his lot? Will it not be wise of you to use your life rather than to brood over it, to turn your lot, with all its changes, to good account, rather than to fret over the problems it suggests?"

Another argument may be hinted at in the Divine Answer. In his sublime description of the heavens and the earth and all that in them is, Jehovah may have meant to suggest to Job: "Consider these mysteries and parables of Nature, and what they reveal of the end and purpose of Him by whom they were created. You cannot adequately interpret any one of them, but you see that they all work together for good. You cannot tell how the world was made, how the firm earth and flowing seas were formed; but the earth yields you her fruits, and the sea carries your ships and brings you the wealth of distant lands. You cannot command the wind, or the clouds that bring rain; but you can see that the winds carry health and the rains fertility wherever they go. You cannot explain the migration of the birds that travel all the year, but you can see that God feeds and fosters them by the instinct which drives them from shore to shore. The world around you is full of mysteries which you cannot solve; but so far as you can judge, is not their end a beneficent

end? And if the world within you also has mysteries which you cannot fathom, cannot you trust that, somehow, here or hereafter, those too will reach a final goal of good? The mystery of life, the mystery of pain,—may not these be as benevolent as you admit the marvels and mysteries of Nature to be?"

This is the argument of the Divine Answer, so far as it has an argument; and even this is suggested rather than stated. And, as we have admitted, it does not go very deep. It does not solve the problems over which we brood; it only points us to other problems equally difficult, equally insoluble. It does not affirm even, it only hints, that the end of all these mysteries may be a good end, an end of mercy and grace. There is enough for faith to think over and to rest upon, but there is no clear satisfying answer for doubt; there is enough to nourish the heart, but not enough to convince the intellect and stop the mouth of gainsayers. We are not told—much as we long to know it—why God permits evil to exist, or why He permits it to take so many painful and apparently injurious forms for the righteous. We are simply invited to trust in the God whom we have found to be good, and to believe that out of evil itself He will educe a greater good. God does not argue with us, nor seek to force our trust; for trust and love are not to be forced, but won. You cannot force even your own child to love and confide in you. All you can do is to surround him with a large pure atmosphere of kindness, to shew him that you are worthy of his confidence and affection. When you have done your best and

utmost, he may abuse your confidence and repay your kindness with a thoughtless ingratitude. It may be necessary that he should go out into the world, and discover its coldness, its selfishness, its indifference, before he can learn to value your tenderness and repay your love with love. And it is thus with us and God. He is good, and gentle, and kind. But we are wilful, careless, ungrateful. In his wisdom and kindness He sends us out to contend against the adversities of life; He permits us to serve the sinful passions we love more than we love Him, that we may find how cruel and degrading a bondage their service is. The "tempest" sweeps through our darkened heaven, through our darkened hearts, strewing them with wrecks: and, now, if the kind tender Voice speak to us out of the tempest with an unalterable affection, if the conviction come to us that God is our Father and loves us, our love springs to meet the love of our Father in heaven; we wait for no arguments, we ask no proofs: it is enough that our Father speaks to us once more, that He loves us still, that He rejoices over us as we bow in penitence and renewed affection before Him. Not by logical arguments which convince our reason, but by tender appeals which touch and break our hearts, our Father conquers us at last, and wins our trust and love for ever.

CARPUS.

# THE EXPOSITOR.

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## *THE BOOK OF RUTH.*

### III.—IN THE HARVEST-FIELD.

*Chapter ii. verses 1-23.*

“WEEEPING may endure for a night, but joy cometh with the morning.” We have seen how dark Naomi’s night was, how she came back “empty” to the home from which she went out “full.” And in this Chapter we are pathetically reminded of the utter penury and destitution which were implied in that word “empty.” Once opulent and beloved Naomi was reduced to straits so sore that she was compelled to let her beloved daughter go and glean among the rude reapers, that she might bring home a morsel of bread. Nay, so sore was the need that, even as she ate the parched corn in, the harvest-field, Ruth set aside a portion of it to take home with her for Naomi’s use.

Nor was it simply the loss of husband and sons of wealth and consideration, by which the spirit of Naomi was oppressed. To the pangs of hunger and grief and shame there was added the still keener torture of religious despair. To herself and her neighbours she seemed “smitten of God,

## THE BOOK OF RUTH.

and afflicted." And hence she broke into the exceeding bitter cry, "*The Lord* hath testified against me, and *the Almighty* hath afflicted me."

The Lord *had* testified against her and afflicted her. But the judgments of God ever have a purpose of mercy; and we are now to see how his mercy shone through the cloud of judgment, turning night into day.

Among the kinsmen of Elimelech was a certain Boaz, a man who had distinguished himself in war, and who is therefore described, as Gideon and Jephthah are described, as "a valiant hero," *i.e.*, a brave captain or commander, whose military exploits were well known to the men of his generation. It is unfortunate that our Version renders the Hebrew phrase "a mighty man of wealth;" for though Boaz was rich, and was as able in peace as in war, the phrase undoubtedly points to his valour and capacity in the field of battle. His very name means "son of strength;" and, no doubt, his "strength," his vigour of body and of spirit, had been displayed against the enemies of Israel, *i.e.*, the Philistines, with whom there seems to have been almost constant war while Eli was Judge. "None but the brave deserve the fair;" and, considering the time in which they lived, we cannot but be a little glad, for Ruth's sake, that Boaz had proved himself a brave soldier in the stricken field.

But there is a higher courage than that which faces death without fear. This, too, as we shall see, Boaz possessed. He had "the courage of his convictions." When once he saw a course of action to be just and generous, he did not fear to take it, how-

ever unusual it was, and though his neighbours had much to say against it. Above all, he was not ashamed of his *religious* convictions. It was as natural to him to express them as it was to breathe. As often as we see him we see that "the law of the Lord is in his heart," that it influenced the whole round and detail of his life.

How came it to pass, then, that a man so bold and generous and pious left Naomi unhelped and uncomforted in the time of her penury and grief? We cannot altogether tell. He may have been absent on military service when she returned from the Field of Moab, and have only got leave of absence, as soldiers then commonly did, during harvest. He may only just have heard the tale of Naomi's sorrows when he met Ruth in the harvest-field. And, indeed, his words to Ruth, "It hath been fully *shewn* me all that thou hast done," imply that he had only *heard* of what most of the other inhabitants of Bethlehem had seen, that he was absent when "all the city was moved" by the return of Naomi.

Moreover, the word rendered "kinsman" in verse 1 means, literally, "acquaintance;" and though the word "acquaintance" carried more to a Hebrew ear than it does to ours, it implies that Boaz was not a close kinsman of Naomi's husband: it signifies that, while not a near relative, Boaz was *known* to the family as belonging to it: they were acquainted with him as one of themselves. In brief, he was a kinsman, but a distant kinsman; and, before he interfered, he might well wait to see what the nearer kindred would do. As they did

exactly nothing, the opportunity of shewing mercy and doing kindness passed over to him.

Nay, by a special act of Providence—so at least the Sacred Narrative implies—this opportunity was brought to his very door. Ruth goes gleaning, and, as a stranger to Bethlehem and its vicinity, she might of course have lit on the fields of an unfriendly owner. But "*her lot met her* in the field of Boaz;" *i.e.*, she was guided to this field by the hand of Providence. Wandering at her will, going whithersoever she would, God was nevertheless with her and directed her steps.

We may be sure that it was not without some hesitation that the modest and gentle Ruth offered to glean after the reapers, and that it was not without much reluctance that Naomi gave her consent. Then, as now, reapers were apt to be vicious and rude. All through this Chapter we can see that Ruth ran grave risk of deadly insult. Boaz strictly enjoins his young men not to "molest," or maltreat, her. Naomi is overjoyed that she need not go into any other field than that of Boaz, lest, among strangers, she should be insulted or injured. So that we may be sure the cupboard was bare, and that Naomi and Ruth were hard pinched by hunger, before either the one or the other could resolve that the risk should be run. And we must take it as a fresh instance of Ruth's love and fidelity that she would run even this risk rather than sit still while Naomi was in want.

The Chapter gives us, incidentally, a graphic picture of an ancient harvest scene. The field is thick with waving barley. The reapers cut their

way into it with sickles, grasping the ears till their arms are full. Behind them, the women gather up the armfuls and bind them into sheaves. Still farther in the rear follow the widow and the stranger, who, according to the Hebrew law, have a right to glean after the reapers. The Overseer is busily urging on the reapers, and granting or refusing admission to the gleaners. Vessels filled, probably, with the rough local wine are at hand, that the heated and thirsty labourers may refresh themselves at need. The "house," with its barns, threshing-floors, and various out-buildings, stands in, or near, the field; and here the weary may rest when the heat and burden of the day prove too great for their strength. Here, too, under the shade of some spreading tree, men and women gather at meal-time, and are supplied with parched corn, and with bread which they dip in a cool and strengthening mixture of vinegar and oil and water. As the day advances the Master of the Estate comes to see how the work goes on. With grave pious courtesy he salutes his "young men" with the words "Jehovah be with you;" and they reply, "Jehovah bless thee."<sup>1</sup> He is quick to notice the presence of a stranger, and to inquire who she is and whence she comes. He is careful to shield her from insult and wrong, and to help her in her need. His tone to his young men is a fine blending of kindness with authority, and he shews himself even more careful for their good conduct than for their diligence in their work.

It is a charming scene: and one does not wonder that poets have sung of the beauty, purity, and

<sup>1</sup> A somewhat similar scene is suggested in Psalm cxxix. 7, 8.

simplicity of rural life. Nevertheless, one has only to go into country villages, and to wander in the fields where the reapers reap till the sun falls and all the land is dark, to discover that rural life is not so innocent and idyllic as it looks to the poet's eye; that it is marred by at least as much ignorance, vice, and brutal coarseness of speech, manner, and habit, as the life of towns. And even as we gaze on *this* fair harvest scene, and listen to the pious greetings of master and men, we are again and again reminded of the cruel and deadly lusts which lurk under its fair exterior, and can only the more admire a man like Boaz and a woman like Ruth who move, untainted, through a scene by no means pure.

The very fact which would be likely to expose Ruth to the clownish jests and insults of the reapers, the fact that she was an alien, conspicuous perhaps by her foreign garb and ornaments, also drew upon her the attention of Boaz. Naturally, so soon as he sees her, he begins to ask of his Overseer who she is and from whence she came. The Overseer's reply shews that he had caught some touch of his master's generous and considerate spirit. He tells Boaz that Ruth is the Moabitish damsel who had come with Naomi to Bethlehem; that, ignorant perhaps of her legal right to glean in any Hebrew field, she had begged his permission to "gather after the reapers;" and he is forward to commend her diligence. She has been hard at work from morning till now, and had only once rested for a few moments in the shed, or "house," set apart for the weary.

Boaz, struck perhaps by the beauty of Ruth and the modesty of her demeanour, and knowing that she is of kin to him, multiplies marks of favour and kindness upon her. She is to remain on his estate, following the reapers from field to field, till the harvest is over. She need fear no rudeness or insult, for he has strictly charged the young men not to "molest," or offend, her. She is to drink freely from the vessels prepared for the reapers, although, as a gleaner, she could have no claim to share with them.

In her humility, Ruth, who had done so much for Naomi, and made so many sacrifices, expects no grace or help from others. Even the slight kindness of Boaz overwhelms her with gratitude. She flings herself at his feet and pours out her thanks for the kindly notice he has taken of an alien and a stranger.

And, as might have been expected, the generous heart of Boaz opens all the wider as he listens to her thanks and learns how unassuming she is, how grateful even for the easy kindness he has shewn her. He knows who she is, and what she has done. And the piety, as well as the generosity, of the man comes out in his reply. "You have left all," he says, "in your love for Naomi,—father, mother, and the land of your nativity. The Lord recompense you for this good deed. As you have come to take refuge under the wings of Israel's God, may He grant you a full reward." Obviously Boaz had the history of his great ancestor in his mind. Like Ruth, Abraham had left all, and gone out into a strange country. And to him God had said, "*I am thy great reward.*"

May the blessing of faithful Abraham come on faithful Ruth,—this is the wish and prayer of Boaz. He speaks, not as a Hebrew landowner to a Moabitish vagabond and beggar, but, rather, as a Hebrew judge and prophet,—as a prophet who knew that even the stranger who works righteousness and shews kindness is acceptable to God.

The blessing of Boaz fell on the heart of Ruth like showers on the mown grass. Hitherto she had known only sorrow and shame. No Israelite had recognized her, or helped her, or shewn either any appreciation of her noble love for her mother, or any wish to welcome her to the faith and privilege of Israel. To all but Boaz she was simply "*the Moabitess*,"—a stranger to the Covenant, an alien from the Commonwealth. But now the valiant soldier whom all Bethlehem praised, who sat as judge and teacher among his people, blesses her for her goodness, and assures her of the protection and goodwill of the God of Israel. "Thou hast comforted me," she gratefully replies; "thou hast spoken to my very heart, in thus blessing me, the alien, and in naming the Name of thy God upon me."

Ruth utters no reproach against the men of Bethlehem for leaving her in her unprovided loneliness and need; but the very passion of her gratitude for his friendly recognition must have made Boaz aware of the utter isolation in which she had lived, of the unsympathetic and suspicious element through which she had sadly moved. And his heart warms to her more and more. Here are a virtue, a tenderness, a fidelity, such as he had not found, no, not in Israel;

and yet no man seems conscious of it: it meets with no appreciation, enlists no sympathy, wins no response. The noble love noble deeds, and those who do them; and, probably, this brave soldier felt that even his courage was as nothing to that of the gentle woman who stood before him. He, therefore, will help her all he can. As she has come to glean in his fields, he will take care that her gleanings be ample, and that her wants be satisfied. As the reapers gather for their meal, he bids Ruth sit with them. Knowing that they will take their tone from him, he himself hands her the parched corn. When the meal is over, he bids her, instead of following the reapers afar off, glean among the sheaves,—nay, bids the reapers pull out a few ears from those they gather in their arms and let them fall where she will find them. Above all, he charges them not to “shame” her, not to jest or romp in their rude country fashion so as to put her to the blush. In any harvest-field a woman, and especially a comely woman, to whom such extraordinary favour was shewn by the “master,” would only too surely become a mark for evil tongues. And we can, therefore, well understand why Boaz, who shewed his true courtesy by resolving to help Ruth in her own way, laid so stringent a rein on the young men’s lips. Happily, too, the Overseer was her friend, or, despite the strict injunction of Boaz, Ruth might have suffered much and deeply from the men who cut the barley and the women who bound it into sheaves.

Amid this shower of favours Ruth did not cease to be herself. When Boaz hands her an abundance

of parched corn, she eats till she is satisfied—so generous is the supply; but she thinks of Naomi's hunger as she satisfies her own, and lays aside a portion of the food. Nor does she stint her labour because, by the kindness of Boaz, it is now more productive. She works on till evening, and works to such good purpose that, when she beats out her gleanings, she has upwards of fifty pounds of barley to carry home.

When Naomi sees how much Ruth has gleaned she is amazed, and cries, "Where hast thou been? In whose field canst thou have gleaned?" But here once more we are made to feel that we are with those in whom piety is an active and ruling power. Any woman, however selfish or godless, might have been as surprised and glad as Naomi was at this unexpected turn of fortune. But she, before even her question can be answered, and moved simply by the manifest happiness of Ruth in the abundance of her gleanings, "blesses" the man who has given her this happiness. For *this* she does not need to know who he is. Whoever had been kind and bountiful to Ruth must have meant to shew that he appreciated her virtues and felt for her misfortunes. And therefore Naomi exclaims, "Blessed be he, whoever he may be, who has taken friendly note of thee." It had been hard for her to send Ruth out to such work. The man who had treated her beloved daughter so kindly that she came home loaded with a weight of barley, and bright and happy in the issue of her toils, has done a good deed for which she invokes on him the benediction of God.

When the blessing has been pronounced, Ruth tells the story of the day, and names Boaz as the man who had befriended her. She, apparently, did not know how much the sound of this name would convey to Naomi's ears,—knew nothing probably either of the kinsmen of Elimelech or of the obligations which kinship imposed among the Hebrews. But Naomi sees the full significance of her kinsman's kindness at a glance, and breaks into a transport of religious gratitude. She explains, “The man is akin to us, one of our *go'elim*” (a term the significance of which I reserve till we reach the next Chapter), and pours forth a song of praise: “Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead.”

If we would enter into the force of this outburst of praise, we must remember that Naomi had lost her faith—not in God indeed, but in the goodwill of God for her. She had thought that He was turned to be her foe, and the foe of the husband and sons who had been snatched from her, although she has suffered no hint of this haunting fear to escape her till now. They were dead because they had sinned in forsaking the land of the Covenant. She was bereaved, forsaken, “empty,” because she had shared their sin. So, at least, she had conceived. But now, in the wonderful Providence which had led Ruth to find a friend in her valiant and wealthy kinsman, she descries a proof that God had not wholly abandoned her, that He had not left off his kindness whether to her or to the beloved dead. No one who has witnessed such a revulsion from spiritual despair to renewed hope in the Divine goodness and compas-

sion will marvel at the ecstasy which breathes in Naomi's words. Rather, he will be sure that it would be long before she could recover her composure, and listen to what Ruth had still to tell ; he will feel that in this brief exclamation of praise we have, compressed into a single sentence, the substance of many heartfelt thanksgivings.

When we consider how potent our kindness may be in quickening the sense of God's kindness and compassion in a neighbour's heart, and how potent, therefore, our lack of kindness and compassion may be, in inducing or confirming a neighbour's despair, we may well tremble at the responsibility which, at any moment, may fall upon us. It was not till Naomi arrived in Bethlehem, and saw her neighbours indifferent and apathetic, however curious and inquisitive they were, that she concluded herself to be shut out from the mercy of God. It was only when Boaz shewed a little kindness to her daughter—such a kindness as we may shew a neighbour any day—that she felt the door of Mercy was once more thrown open to her. Let us, then, be kindly affectioned one to another. We may not be able to do much,—Boaz did but give a few handfuls of barley and speak a few considerate words,—and yet what we do may suffice to lift the weight from some heavily burdened heart. Our kindness may make way for the kindness of God. Our little may help Him to do much.

S. COX.

*THE PROLOGUE OF ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL.*

II.—THE LOGOS (*continued*).

With respect to the *idea* of this Eternal Being, the medium of the Divine works and revelations, John had heard (at least we gather as much from his Gospel) Jesus assert his eternity, and, consequently, his divinity. He had learnt from his lips that He was before Abraham, and that Abraham had rejoiced in the prospect of his appearing on the earth as the Messiah. By means of these declarations of Jesus he had explained to himself that enigmatical saying of John the Baptist, "*He that cometh after me was before me.*" From this vantage-ground he looks backward and contemplates the Old Testament, where he discovers the three forms of Divine manifestation which we have pointed out: *Speaking*, by which God acts from the beginning; *Wisdom*, which was his associate in the work of creation; and the *Maleach*, the equal of Jehovah, who, as *Messiah*, was to come and take up his abode personally in his temple.—How, therefore, when once he had recognized Jesus as the *Messiah*, could he fail to discern in Him the supreme and primordial Revealer, and, in his appearing, the perfect theophany announced as the completion of all previous mediations? The testimonies of Jesus and John the Baptist threw light upon the Old Testament, while at the same time receiving confirmation from it.

2. As to the term *Logos*, employed by John to denote the Divine Being who appeared in Christ, if the Jewish doctors, without having had the slightest connection with Alexandrian speculation, had been

led, by the Old Testament itself, to apply to the superhuman Mediator between God and his people the name, the Word of the Lord, why could not the Evangelist either appropriate this expression—since it was Scriptural—or adopt of his own accord a similar appellation? Apart from our ignorance as to the exact age of the Chaldee paraphrases, the second alternative appears the more probable if we take into consideration the facts mentioned above. Who does not feel that there is an essential difference in the meaning of the term Word in these two expressions: *the Word of Jehovah* and *the Word*, absolutely speaking? The first expression is taken from the intercourse of Jehovah with his people, and denotes nothing more than a simple relation; the second denotes the very essence of the Being thus designated. The latter contains all that is implied in the former, and much more besides. The denomination employed by the Rabbins includes, under a generic name, the entire series of theocratic manifestations; that of John comprehends all those divine phenomena which have succeeded each other in time, referring them to their permanent principle, and teaches us that, if the Being in question has been the agent of Divine manifestation in such and such particular circumstances, it is because He is Himself the revelation. He not merely reveals, He is, absolutely speaking, Revelation itself, the WORD. In Him revelation is not an act or attribute; it is his very essence. John, therefore, only gives an absolute form to the term used in the Old Testament to express the series of Divine revelations; and in this way he raises its meaning to its highest power.

And the object he has in view is simply to say : "There is no revealer after or besides this ! For this Being is Revelation itself, Revelation incarnate. Let every one of the *λόγοι* which I am going to communicate be received as an emanation from the absolute Logos!" From this point of view the relation of verse 18 to the first verse of the Prologue is obvious. The words *ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο* in verse 18 are just the author's own commentary on the word Logos. The passage xii. 44-50, also may convince any one that we have found the real thought of the author.

3. We must not identify, as is generally done, the question of the origin of this term with that of its *employment* by the Evangelist. Its origin is purely Biblical, as we have just seen ; but it would be surprising certainly had John, after a long residence in those countries of Asia Minor where the use made at Alexandria and elsewhere of the word Logos could not be unknown, inscribed this term so conspicuously at the head of his Gospel without any special design. If John's employment of this word was not something borrowed, it certainly contained an allusion. To those Hellenists and Hellenistic Jews, on the one hand, who were vainly philosophizing on the relations of the finite and infinite, to those investigators of the letter of the Scriptures, on the other, who speculated about the theocratic revelations, John said, by giving this name Logos to Jesus : "The unknown Mediator between God and the world, the knowledge of whom you are striving after, we have seen, heard, and touched ; your philosophical speculations and your Scriptural subtleties will never raise you to Him ; believe, as we do, in

Jesus, and you will possess in Him that Divine Revealer who engages your thoughts.”<sup>1</sup>

The explanation which we have just offered supposes that the discourses which St. John puts into the mouth of Jesus were really uttered by Him; but this premiss is the very point in dispute. We are asked how it comes to pass, if the Prologue is an historical summary of the discourses of our Lord, that the Synoptics should have preserved no trace of this teaching of Jesus respecting his own person.<sup>2</sup>

It is only from this special point of view, and within the briefest space, that we can discuss the relation of the Synoptics to the Fourth Gospel. But we hope to prove that the teaching of Jesus in the Synoptics not only agrees with, but requires just such a testimony on the part of Jesus respecting his own person, as is given in the Gospel according to St. John. An attempt is made to represent the Jesus of the Synoptics as a simple preacher of morality, quite opposed to the Jesus of John, who is said to be perpetually occupied with metaphysical speculations respecting his own person. The doctrine of the former, it would seem, just amounts to the preaching of love to God and our neighbour; whilst with the latter the whole of religion consists in a belief in his mysterious relation to his Father. Here, again, we have one of those shades of difference which are cleverly construed into contrarieties. Is it not the Jesus of the Synoptics, who says, “*Whosoever loveth father, mother, or wife, more than me, is not worthy of me*”? Is it not He who says, “*Come unto*

<sup>1</sup> See Neander, “Gesch. der Pflanz. der Christl. K.,” t. ii. p. 549.

<sup>2</sup> Baur, “Thcol. Jahrb.,” t. iii. p. 8.

me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"? Is it possible to read the Synoptics without getting the impression that it is in Jesus, and in Jesus alone, that God imparts Himself, and that attachment to Him is the supreme duty from which the accomplishment of all other duties will flow? Does the position of the Jewish Messiah, in the ordinary meaning of the word, explain this complete self-abandonment, this personal and unbounded love which Jesus claims? When He says, "*No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him*" (Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22), thus laying it down that the essence of the Son is a mystery known by God alone and that the essence of the Father is only revealed to the Son and by the Son, does He not distinctly assert the existence of that unexampled relation between God and Him which is taught in the Prologue, a relation of equality through the love which the Father testifies for the Son, and, at the same time a relation of subordination through the consecration of the Son to the Father? Is there a single passage in the entire Gospel of John which could serve more completely as a text to the 18th verse of the Prologue? When, in St. Mark, Jesus says, speaking of the day of his return (xiii. 32), "*But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels who are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father,*" does He not attribute to Himself a position superior to that of the highest creatures? Further, when in the institution of baptism (Matt. xxviii. 19) He places Himself as Son between the Father and the Holy Spirit,

is it possible still to explain this idea of the Son by that of the Messiah? The Messiah, as the name denotes, is the anointed of the Holy Spirit, and consequently, in relation to Him, an inferior. And if the Holy Spirit is a Divine principle, the breath of God's mouth (Psa. xxxiii. 6), as all Scripture supposes, what then is He who, under the title of Son, is placed between the Father and the Spirit? Lastly, what would be the reply of our modern critics to Jesus if He addressed to them the same question which He puts to his adversaries in the three Synoptics (Matt. xxii. 45; Mark xii. 37; Luke xx. 41): "*If David calls the Christ his Lord, how is he his Son?*" The answer in our Lord's mind could be none other than this: By his Divine essence He is his Lord; by his human nature He is his son. Our Lord is evidently thinking here of a relation of nature, and not merely of will and love; otherwise this question would have been a mere artifice on his part, and of a very base kind. The authenticity of this incident has the very highest guarantee in that it is found in all three Synoptics, and no particular tendency can have occasioned the invention of it. So far, therefore, from saying, with Baur, that "in the Synoptics we have not the smallest reason for going beyond the idea of a purely human Messiah," we avow our conviction, by means of this brief enumeration of passages, that John makes Jesus say nothing which He might not really have said, if it is true that He said what the Synoptics represent Him as saying. More than this, the position which He assumes in the latter being such that there is not a single Divine attribute or function which is not

necessarily connected with it, we should be obliged in any case to admit, even if we did not possess the Gospel of John, that Jesus was under obligation to speak, at least among his own disciples, with greater explicitness respecting his person, so as to take away the stumbling-block which a half-revelation on such a capital point must have been to them as well as to the Jews. How it is that these fuller testimonies are not found in the Synoptics is a question which we cannot yet discuss, because its solution can only be arrived at after a full consideration of the relation of the Fourth Gospel to the other Three. But this we may say, on the ground of the facts just mentioned, that not only is there no such insoluble contradiction on this point between the Fourth Gospel and the three others, but that, as Ritschl<sup>1</sup> puts it, the teaching of the Synoptics *demands*, as its necessary historical complement, the teaching of John.

4. In dealing with Baur, however, we may find support in a document which has all the value of a gospel : we mean the Apocalypse. This book is attributed by him to the Apostle John, a true Jewish Christian, representing, consequently, that primitive Christianity which the Apostle Paul is supposed to have transformed and falsified. Baur says himself that the Apostle John took up his abode at Ephesus, and made that city the centre of his activity, for no other purpose than "to maintain the principles of the Christianity of Jerusalem against the usurpations of Pauline Christianity."<sup>2</sup> His Apocalypse, therefore, must be a fair representation of the former. Now, what does it say respecting the person of Jesus ?

<sup>1</sup> "Entstchung der altcath. Kirche," p. 48, 1857.

<sup>2</sup> "Das Christ u die Christl. K.," &c., p. 82.

Baur expressly admits that in the Apocalypse "the Messiah is called Jehovah, God in the highest sense;" but he adds: "We must not conclude from this that a true Divine nature is attributed to Him."<sup>1</sup> He acknowledges that Christ is called *ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως*, and that "this expression seems to imply clearly enough the idea of pre-existence." But he adds: "Since the idea is not clearly expressed anywhere else in this writing, the meaning of this expression must be that the Messiah is the highest of all creatures."<sup>2</sup> As if, when the Messiah is called Alpha, the first, he *who is, who was, and who is to come*, and is invested with all the functions and attributes of Jehovah in the Old Testament, this did not imply, especially from the point of view of Jewish monotheism, which separates so rigorously God from the creature, the divinity and eternity of this Being. Baur admits, lastly, that "all the loftiest predicates are attributed to Christ in the Apocalypse;" but he says "these titles are only applied to Him externally, and are not connected with his person by any essential relation."<sup>3</sup> For the intelligent reader these admissions and answers should suffice. The more it is insisted that the Apocalypse is a document of the primitive Jewish Christianity, the more clearly this book demonstrates that the divinity of Jesus formed part of the faith of the first disciples, and consequently of the teaching of the Master Himself. We observe, in conclusion, that the name "Word of God" is applied to Jesus in the Apocalypse, xix. 13: "*His name is the Word of God,*" and that if this name was borrowed from the philosophy

<sup>1</sup> "Das Christ u. die Christl. K.," &c, p. 315.<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 316.<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 317.

of Philo, or from Gnosticism, it would not be easy to explain how it could have found its way into a writing with such a limited horizon as that attributed to the author of the Apocalypse, and at the remote period when, according to the universal judgment of this school of critics, the Apostle must have composed this book (before the fall of Jerusalem).

Under whatever aspect we regard the question before us, we arrive at the conclusion that the teaching of the Master as contained in our Gospel,—the general authenticity of which, so far from being set aside, is confirmed by the Synoptics and the Apocalypse,—is amply sufficient to explain the contents of John's Prologue.

We have thus obtained the following results :

1. The idea of the eternal divinity of the Messiah formed part of the teaching of Jesus Himself.

2. The name "Logos" is taken by John from the language of the Old Testament, and is designed to set forth the Messiah as the finisher of preceding revelations, as the absolute essential Revelation.

3. The employment of this term by St. John was suggested to him by the desire of opposing a healthy and life-giving *Christian realism* to the *hollow idealism*<sup>1</sup> which confronted him in his contemporaries.

Weizsäcker,<sup>2</sup> in the article referred to before, has objected that if Christ really declared Himself God, as we find Him doing in the Gospel of John, his disciples would have been unable to maintain those familiar relations in which they lived with Him for the length of three years. But is it not quite as difficult to understand how, if Jesus had not

<sup>1</sup> Expressions of Neander.

<sup>2</sup> "Jahrb. für Deutsche Theol." t. vii., fourth edition.

declared Himself God, they could have come to regard as such a being with whom, for three years, they had kept up such familiar relations ? Question for question, the first appears easier to solve than the second.

F. GODET.

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THE EPISTLES TO  
THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.

I.—EPHESUS (*Revelation ii. 1-7*).

WITH the topography of the city of Ephesus, with its history prior to the formation of a Christian Church within its walls, we are not at present concerned. They have hardly the slightest appreciable bearing upon the interpretation of the words which now come before us. All that we need to remember is that its far-famed Temple of Artemis—visited by pilgrims from all quarters of the Empire, who carried away with them on their departure the silver shrines made by Demetrius and his craftsmen as memorials of their visit; surrounded by a population of priests, guides, artisans, who by that craft had their living—made it one of the great centres of Heathenism ; and that when St. Paul and his companions, following in the footsteps of Apollos, planted the Church of Christ there, they must have felt that they were gaining a victory over one of the strongholds of the powers of darkness. Its religion was, however, Oriental rather than Hellenic in its character. The image of the many-breasted Artemis who was there worshipped, that was fabled to have fallen from heaven, looking to our eyes like an Indian

idol, would have offended the cultivated taste of an Athenian, accustomed to gaze on the works of Phidias and Praxiteles. As in all Eastern cities, its people dealt much in magic and charms and incantations, and the Ephesian talismans, or “books of curious arts” (the *γράμματα Ἐφέσια* of Greek writers), had a world-wide renown, and fetched an almost fabulous price (Acts xix. 19). There, as in most commercial cities, Jews had found their way in large numbers, and had their synagogues open to proselytes and inquirers. Not a few of them drifted more or less openly into connection with the superstitions against which they ought to have borne their witness. They were coppersmiths, like Alexander (2 Tim. iv. 14), and had apparently trade relations with the workmen of Demetrius (Acts xix. 38). They boasted of their powers in the cases commonly ascribed to demoniacal possession, and, like the seven sons of Sceva, who claimed to be in some sense a chief priest of the house of Aaron, sought gain and fame as exorcists. In spite of this decline from their true dignity, perhaps in proportion to it, they were conspicuous for their fanatic zeal for holy places and for holy customs, and were the first to raise their outcry against St. Paul when, as they thought, he had taken an uncircumcised Ephesian within the precincts of the temple, beyond the wall of partition, which it was death for any Gentile to pass.

The stages of progress in the Christian community at Ephesus may be traced with sufficient distinctness. First, there had been the preaching of some disciples of the Baptist, reviving the zeal of the Jews, calling them to repentance, imposing more rigid rules of life.

Then had come Apollos himself, as yet knowing only the baptism of John, but with wider thoughts, and teaching more fully than they had done the "first principles of the doctrine of Christ." Then had come Aquila and Priscilla, with their more perfect knowledge, teaching the way of the Lord as St. Paul taught it, though, we must believe, with less power and completeness. Then St. Paul himself appeared, preaching his Gospel, at first in the synagogues to his own people of the stock of Abraham, afterwards to the disciples and to Gentile inquirers as a separate body in the lecture-room (belonging, possibly, to a school of medicine) that was known as belonging to Tyrannus.<sup>1</sup> Wonders of a kind precisely adapted to meet the faith of the Ephesians in charms and talismans were wrought by his hands, and even by the handkerchiefs and aprons to which contact with his flesh had imparted a mysterious power. The result of this two-fold influence was the rapid conversion of a large number of the heathen, chiefly among those who had been practitioners in the arts of sorcery. They brought the books in which they had learnt to see the work of the enemy of God, and burnt them publicly in some open square or market-place. How full and thorough was the success of the Apostle in his mission-work among his new disciples, how rapid

<sup>1</sup> The name Tyrannus occurs in the "Columbarium" of Livia as belonging to a physician of the imperial household. Such occupations often descended, with the name, from father to son among the freedmen attached to the imperial household, and I venture to surmise that this Tyrannus also was of the same calling, and that the "beloved physician" who was St. Paul's friend and fellow-worker, may have been acquainted with him, and that it was through his influence that the use of the lecture-room was obtained.

the progress which they made in Christian thought and feeling, we find from his earnest desire to see the elders of the Ephesian Church, on his last journey to Jerusalem, even though he could not personally visit their city, and from the words of parting counsel which he addressed to them. He who spake to others as to carnal, as to babes in Christ, had not shunned to preach to them the whole counsel of God. In the midst of constant opposition, with the fear of frequent plots, amid tears and trials, he had done his work. But even then his eye saw signs of evils as yet half latent: "the grievous wolves not sparing the flock," Jewish persecutors from without, the "men from among their own selves speaking perverse things," who should draw away disciples after them,—these filled him with anxious and sad forebodings. And so they parted, as they both then thought never to meet again.

So far as we can gather from the Epistle to the Ephesians, no tidings had reached the Apostle in the interval to cause him fresh anxiety. Its tone is throughout free from the indignation or warning or reproof which we find in so many of his letters. He remembers his intercourse with them with thankfulness and joy. He has heard of their faith in the Lord Jesus and their love towards all saints. He appeals to them as able to understand his knowledge in the mystery of Christ. No messenger has come from them, as Epaphras had come from Colossæ, to tell him that false teachers had crept in and were subverting the Gospel which he had preached. He must have looked forward to his return to them—and we know from the letter to Philemon that he

*was* looking forward—with joy and hope. The Pastoral Epistles, if we accept them as St. Paul's and place them in their right relation to his life, shew us how bitterly he was disappointed. False teachers had come, claiming the authority of Rabbis, desiring to be teachers of the Law, and yet ignorant of its true scope and office. There were perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, having a form of godliness, but denying its power, creeping into houses and leading captive silly women laden with sins. His own followers and friends had not the courage to stand by him, and all men forsook him. It was necessary to leave Timotheus behind him to maintain purity of doctrine and completeness of organization. And even he, zealous and devoted as he was, seemed hardly equal to the burden that was thus laid upon him. He was too young to speak with the authority of a wide experience, younger than many of those whom he was called to control and to reprove. He was weak in health; and the overstrained asceticism which he had imposed on himself as a rule of life tended to want of promptness and of energy. He needed, even in the last parting words of counsel which St. Paul ever wrote to him, to be stirred to fresh activity, to be warned against the spirit of timidity that shrinks from hardship and from conflict, against the profane and vain babblings which, under the show of a mystical elevation that seemed to men as a rising from the death of sin, were denying that there was any other resurrection.

It was necessary to bring before our thoughts what we know of the Ephesian Church just as the

great Apostle of the Gentiles was about to pass from the scene of labour, that so we might the better enter into the spirit of the message sent to it through the pen of the beloved disciple. The shorter the interval between the two—and on the assumption which I have adopted as to the date of the Apocalypse, the interval must have been very short—the closer must have been the resemblance between the state of things described in the Pastoral Epistles and that pre-supposed in the message with which we are now dealing. But the facts lead us, if I mistake not, to a conclusion of deeper and more personal interest. Timotheus had been left in charge of that Church. That was the flock committed to him as one of the chief shepherds. If we think of the Angel of the Church of Ephesus as its personal ruler and representative, there is at least a strong presumption in favour of our thinking of the words before us as addressed to none other than to St. Paul's true son in the faith. It will be seen that a closer examination of the message confirms this conclusion.

It is noteworthy that each one of the messages opens with a description of him who speaks them, embodying one or more of the characteristic attributes given in the preceding Chapter. It is perhaps impossible to connect in each case the attribute thus selected with the wants or trials of each particular Church; but there can be little doubt that as Ephesus stands first in order of importance among the Seven Churches, so the fact that He who sends the message "holdeth the seven stars in his right hand" and "walketh in the midst of the seven golden

candlesticks," is that on which most stress is laid. He holds the stars as one who rejoices in their brightness so long as they shine clearly, who sustains, protects, and guides them, as He guides the stars of heaven in their courses, who can and will cast them away, even though they were as the signet on his right hand, should they cease to shine. He walks among the candlesticks as One who knows and judges all that makes the lamps burn brightly or dimly, who feeds the lamp with the oil of his grace, and trims it with the discipline of his love that it may burn more brightly, and who, if it cease to burn, though He will not quench the smoking flax while as yet there is a hope of revival, will yet remove the lamp out of its place, and give to another that work of giving light to those that are in his spiritual house, which it has failed to accomplish.

If I am right in my inference from the assumed early date of the Apocalypse, the words that follow ought to present some striking points of coincidence with the language addressed to Timothy in the Pastoral Epistles; and this, if I mistake not, they do in a measure which leaves hardly the shadow of a doubt. The work, the labour, the endurance—these are precisely what St. Paul acknowledges in his true son in the faith, and exhorts him to abound in them more and more. He reminds him that the husbandman that *laboureth* must be the first partaker of the fruits (2 Tim. ii. 6); calls on him to be "a *workman* that needeth not to be ashamed" (2 Tim. ii. 15); to do "the *work* of an evangelist," and to "*endure afflictions*" (2 Tim. iv. 5). Still more definitely do we find in the words of praise that

follow that which corresponds to the Apostle's counsels. With reiterated earnestness we find him warning his true son in the faith against false teachers, such as Hymenæus, Alexander, Philetus; against those who gave heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons; against profane and vain babblings, whether they came from Judaizing teachers on the one hand or the fantastic dreams of Greek or Gnostic speculation on the other. One who had acted on these cautions might well have earned the commendation bestowed on the Angel of the Church of Ephesus: "Thou canst not bear them that are evil, and thou hast tried them which say that they are apostles and are not, but hast found them liars." To hate evil, to feel the presence of those who are persistent in it as an intolerable burden, to try the claims of those who used great names to cloke it, by some certain test, like that which St. Paul (1 Cor. xii. 3) and St. John himself, here also agreeing with his brother Apostle, had elsewhere suggested (1 John iv. 2, 3), by their agreement with the truth on which the faith of the Church rested, that Christ Jesus had come in the flesh; this was no small work to have done, no light praise to have deserved.

The question who these teachers were, who said they were apostles, is not one which can be answered with any certainty. Doubtless the leaders of every sect and heresy at the opposite poles of error were in the habit of putting forth such claims. The balance of probability inclines, I think, in favour of the view that they were *not* identical with those who are afterwards named as Nicolaitanes, and that they represent the leaders of the Judaizing, anti-Pauline, party in

the Asiatic Churches. These, we know, claimed to be apostles, either of Christ Himself or of the Church at Jerusalem, with special and extraordinary powers, the "very chiefest apostles" of 2 Cor. xii. 11. Of these St. Paul speaks as "false *apostles*, deceitful workers," doing the work of Satan, and yet disguised as angels of light (2 Cor. xi. 13, 14). Those who followed him with ceaseless hostility in Galatia, Corinth, Philippi, and Colossæ were hardly likely to leave Ephesus untouched; and it is noticeable that among the errors against which his warning is most earnest in the Pastoral Epistle, those which are Jewish and legal occupy the foremost place (1 Tim. i. 7; Tit. i. 14). Those who do not come to the study of the Apocalyse with a preconceived theory that it is an anti-Pauline polemic, will find a confirmation of this view in the corresponding words in the message to the Church of Smyrna against those "who say that they are Jews, and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan" (Rev. ii. 9).

The words that follow, though they seem for the most part to repeat the praise already given, present some special points of interest. Then the Angel of the Church had been praised because he could not *bear* the evil workers. Now he is commended because he has *borne* so much. To be intolerant of evil, and to be tolerant of all besides, to *bear* the burdens of other men (Gal. vi. 2), their weaknesses, or coldness, or inattention, to bear also the burden and heat of the day,—all this belongs to the true pastor. In this way he *bears* the cross which his Lord bore before him. And with this there is the renewed mention of "endurance," not simply the

passive resignation to suffering which we commonly associate with the word "patience," but the temper of calm heroic stedfastness which belongs to him "who endureth to the end," and therefore wins his ultimate and complete deliverance from evil. And this endurance has been for the name of Christ, and has shewn itself in many labours (note the use of the self-same word, as in 1 Tim. v. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 6) which have not, arduous as they were, led to weariness or sloth.<sup>1</sup>

It was significant, as a token of the gentleness and tenderness of the Judge, that all that was good should be fully acknowledged first, and that not till then should the evil that threatened its completeness be noticed with words of warning. *That*, we may note, is ever the true method of those who enter, in any measure, into the mind of Christ. Every Epistle of St. Paul (with, perhaps, the solitary exception of that to the Galatians, where the need was urgent and the peril great) is a practical illustration of it. The thought that He with whom we have to do as at once Judge and Friend and Advocate, judges us after this manner, not closing his eyes to any evil that He discerns in us, but also not extreme to mark what is done amiss, and recognizing the good He has enabled us to do even more fully than we ourselves can recognize it, is one which may well come to the minister of Christ in times when his spirit

<sup>1</sup> The various readings require a word of notice. The greater uncial manuscripts give "*οὐκ ικοπίασας*, or *οὐ κεκοπίακας*." "Thou hast not been weary of thy toil." The seeming difficulty of this use of the verb, as a word of blame, led (1) to the omission of the negative, and then (2) to the insertion of "thou hast not fainted," by way of expressing the original thought more clearly.

droops within him and he has misgivings as to his labours and their result, with a power to strengthen and ennable.

The special nature of the fault reproved is, I believe, entirely in accordance with the view which I have taken as to the person who was thus addressed. No one can read the Epistles to Timothy without feeling that, in the midst of all St. Paul's love for his disciple, his recognition of his loyalty, purity, earnestness, there is a latent tone of anxiety. The nature with which he had to do was emotional even to tears, ascetic, devout; but there was in it a tendency to lack of energy and sustained enthusiasm. To supply this defect he exhorts him once and again to be strong, and to endure hardness; to stir up, *i.e.*, to rekindle (*ἀναξωπυρεῖν*, 2 Tim. i. 6), the grace of God; to continue in the things he had learnt, knowing of whom he had learnt them. Such an one falls easily into labours that are genuine as far as they go, and yet are not pervaded by the fervour and energy of love. Whether the "first love" is that which has God, or Christ, or man for its object, I am not careful to inquire; for the true temper of love or charity includes all three; but it is more important to insist that the defect spoken of was one which attached to the angel or bishop of the Church personally, and only to the Church at large so far as it was represented by him and influenced by his example. The "first love" which had been "left" was accordingly not that of the bride for the bridegroom of her espousals, as in Jeremiah ii. 2, but rather that of the friend of the bridegroom, loving and unselfish, whose work it was, the work which

St. Paul had claimed as his own in writing to the Corinthians, to bring the bride to her betrothed and, with loving care, to guard her from defilement (2 Cor. xi. 2, 3).

It has been urged, on the assumption that the words point only or chiefly to the shortcomings of the Church of Ephesus as distinct from its ruler, that they supply an almost decisive proof of the theory which assigns the Apocalypse to the time of Domitian.<sup>1</sup> The change, it is said, is too great; the falling away from the first love too complete to have taken place in any shorter interval. I cannot but think (1) that the personal reference for which I have contended is open to no such objection; and (2) that, even on the assumption of there being a reference, direct or indirect, to the condition of the Ephesian Church, those who lay stress on this objection have dwelt too much on the bright side of the picture presented in the Epistle to the Ephesians, and too little on those darker features which, as we have seen, were already coming into prominence before the ministry of St. Paul had reached its close. What we meet with here is certainly not otherwise than consistent with the warnings and the fears, the all but total desertion, and the thickening heresies which the Pastoral Epistles bring before us. If anything, it indicates something even of a revival, partial though not complete, from the state there portrayed; and we may legitimately connect that revival, both as regards the Church and its representative, with the parting counsels of the Apostle.

The warnings and the counsels which follow on

<sup>1</sup> Archbishop Trench, "Seven Churches," p. 73.

this reproof have a deep ethical significance. "Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen ; and repent, and do the first works." The words bring before our thoughts one of the functions of the awful gift of memory in the spiritual education of the individual soul. As it is true,—

"That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things,"

so also is it true that the first step towards repentance is to call to mind, distinctly and vividly, the highest moments that we have known in our religious experience. There may come a time when that will be the sharpest pang of a sorrow almost or altogether hopeless ; when the recollection that we have been illumined, and tasted of the heavenly gift and the powers of the world to come, will but make us feel more bitterly the difficulty or impossibility of renewal. But short of that, the memory of the past, however painful, is yet remedial. It tells us of the blessedness of which we once have been capable, what we have attained, and therefore may attain again, and so far is an element of encouragement as well as sorrow—of repentance and not of mere remorse. We can yet look back upon the height which we once had reached, and slowly and with painful steps begin to climb again. Out of that memory springs a true contrition and a stedfast effort. And the counsel which follows is precisely that which meets the exigencies of the case. It may not be possible to renew at once "the first love." The old fervour and enthusiasm of faith will not come back at our bidding or our wish. We must take that which, so long as we retain our power to choose, does lie

within our reach, and do the "first works"—in this case those very works on which the Lord of the Churches had already bestowed his praise; and then in due time the warmth will come back to the heart which, in spite of coldness, has persevered in duty. It is possible, though there is no virtue without faith, to gain faith by virtue. It is possible, in like manner, to gain the first love by doing the first works.

The call to repentance is followed by a warning,— "Or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent." The words shew that the "coming of the Lord" had gained a wider and, in some sense, deeper meaning than that which we commonly attach to the second Advent. That to which the warning points is not the great far-off event fixed in the everlasting counsels, but the Judgment Day of Old Testament language, the "day of the Lord," whose coming may be averted or delayed by repentance, hastened by impenitence and defiance. Such days of the Lord come, in the course of the world's history, on all nations and churches that are faithless to their trust. The judgment lingers, the wheels of the Lord's chariot tarry, and men eat and drink, plant and build, marry and are given in marriage, as though all things would go on as they are for ever, and then He "comes quickly," in one or other of the sore judgments which are sent as the chastisement of their want of faith and their evil deeds. Here the judgment threatened was determined by the symbolism of the vision. The lamp was not burning brightly. If it were rekindled and trimmed and fed with oil, well! If not, there would come on it the

sentence which falls on all unfaithfulness, and the lamp should be removed. The Church which had not let its light shine before men, would lose even its outward form and polity, and be as though it had never been.

The Church and its ruler are here, in some measure at least, identified. Unless he repents and does the first works, the society over which he rules, and which is represented by him, will suffer the penalty which attaches to the failure of faith and love in which it has been a sharer. So it is always in the history of nations and of churches. But it would, I believe, be an error to think of the warning and the exhortations as addressed simply to the Church as such, and not to the angel or ruler individually. Much rather is it true that this is urged upon his conscience as a motive to lead him to repentance, that his sins, even though they are negative rather than positive in their character, tend to bring about that terrible result. One whose heart was in his work, who had learnt to look on the Church committed to him with a deep and anxious tenderness, would feel that to be a greater penalty than any personal chastisement. To have the blood of souls that perished required at his hand, to see his work destroyed, even though he himself should be saved, so as by fire, to lose that to which he had looked forward as his joy and crown of rejoicing,—this was and is the penalty of the shepherd who is even partially unfaithful, who has “left his first love.” For those who fill high places to see systems collapsing, an organization disorganized, polity giving way to anarchy;—for those who have

a lower work to perceive that they are not gaining, but losing, ground, that worshippers are scattered and listeners few, and that their own want of love infects their people,—this is the penalty, as by an inevitable law, of their transgression. That over which they have not watched, is decaying and waxing old. The next stage of “vanishing away,” the removal of the candlestick, is not far distant.

I am not disposed to dwell, as most commentators have done, on the present desolate condition of the town of Agio-solouk, which represents by a few scattered huts what was once the Ephesus of worldwide fame, as shewing that the warning was neglected and that the penalty at last came. Doubtless that condition illustrates the working of the law which was proclaimed in the message as a prophecy, in the higher sense of that word; but the time which elapsed before the decay and ruin were brought about carries us too far beyond the horizon indicated by that “coming quickly” for us to look upon it as the distinct fulfilment of a prediction. Rather may we see such a fulfilment under its brighter aspects in the fact that when we next come across traces of the spiritual condition of the Church of Ephesus, it is to recognize a marked change for the better, a revival of the old energy of life and love. When Ignatius addressed his Epistle to that Church, about half a century after what we have assumed as the date of the Apocalypse, he found it under the care of an Onesimus (whether the runaway slave of Colossæ or another of the same name, we cannot say), and abounding in spiritual excellencies. It gives proof of a fulfilment of prophecy of

another kind than that commonly dwelt on to find that the message had done its work. The points on which the Martyr touches are in singular harmony with the counsel given in the message now before us. That in which he rejoiced was that the believers at Ephesus and their bishop "had re-kindled their life" (*ἀναζωπυρίσαντες*, the self-same word as in 2 Tim. i. 6) "in the blood of God,"—that no sect or heresy was found among them. They "had not suffered those who came bringing an evil doctrine to sow their tares among the wheat, but had closed their ears against them." They carried God and Christ in their hearts, and so became as temples; they were *θεοφόροι*, *χριστοφόροι*, *ναοφόροι*. And so the sentence was at least deferred, and for many a long year the candlestick was not removed, and the Church of Ephesus, which had thus been warned, took its place in the history of the Church Catholic as bearing its witness, in the third OEcumenical Council, to the great central truth that "God was manifested in the flesh."

And then once more, and as pointing to that which was a gleam of hope even amidst the symptoms of decay that had called for the word of warning, there came words of recognition and of praise. "This . thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." The questions who these Nicolaitanes were, whence they took their name, what were their hateful deeds, are, I need scarcely say, among the vexed problems of the history of the Apostolic age, for the solution of which we have no satisfying data. On the one side there is the Patristic, but by no means primitive, tradition, that

the proselyte of Antioch, whose name appears in the list of the Seven in Acts vi. 5, had either himself fallen away from the faith, or had by unguarded words given occasion of offence to those that followed him; that he had taught men to abuse (*παραχρῆσθαι*) the flesh in the sense of punishing and afflicting it, and that men had taken the word as meaning that they might use it to the full, and conquer their appetites by indulging them till they ceased to stimulate, and that thus, in order to shew that lust had no power over them, they lived in what the conscience of true Christians condemned as hateful impurities.<sup>1</sup> On the other, we have the conjectures of modern critics that the very word was a play upon the name so prominent about this time both in these very messages and in other apostolic writings—the name of Balaam the son of Beor, after whom many had gone astray (2 Pet. ii. 15), and had run greedily (Jude, verse 11), who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols and to commit fornication.<sup>2</sup> The mention of the two as distinct, though cognate in their corruptions and impurities, in the

<sup>1</sup> See the articles on “Nicolaos” and the “Nicolaitanes,” in Smith’s “Dictionary of the Bible.” The earliest writer who states that the sect so-called claimed Nicolaos the Proselyte as their founder is Irenæus. Clement of Alexandria accepts the story that his teaching had been perverted in the manner above described. Epiphanius imputes the corrupt practices of the sect to the actual example and direct teaching of their founder.

<sup>2</sup> Nicolaos is identified with Balaam, according to one etymology of the latter word, as the “lord,” according to another as the “devourer,” of the people. Both derivations are, however, uncertain, and the best Hebraists (Gesenius and Fürst, the latter admitting the possibility of “devourer”) explain the name as meaning, “not of the people,”—an alien and foreigner.

message to the Church of Pergamos (Rev. ii. 14, 15), seems decisive against absolute identification ; and I incline, with some doubt, to the old Patristic view, that the sect so described took their name, under some colourable plea, from Nicolaos the Proselyte, and reserve what has to be said as to the error of Balaam till we come to it in its own place. It is enough for the present to note the fact that any feeling of righteous hatred of evil, of loathing for that which corrupts and defiles, is welcomed by the Lord of the Churches as a sign of life. As long as there is the capacity for this indignation, there is hope. When this also fails, and men tolerate and accept impurity of words and acts,—when conscience is seared, as with a red-hot iron, then the last sign of life has passed away and decay and putrescence have set in.

Lastly, we have the promise of reward with which this, like all the other messages, ends. Attention is called to it in the self-same words that our Lord had so often used, almost, it might be said, as a formula of teaching in his earthly ministry : “ Whoso hath ears to hear, let him hear ; ” “ He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.” And the promise in this case carries us back, as so much of the recorded teaching of St. John does elsewhere, to the earliest records of the Bible,—to the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis : “ To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”

We remember, as we read the words, that the Apostle had once before heard that promise of “paradise” from the lips of his Lord ; so far as

his recorded teaching goes, once, and once only (Luke xxiii. 43). Both in the general absence of the word and in that solitary use of it, we may reverently recognize a profound wisdom, adapting the phases under which it presented the truth to the capacities and necessities of those who were to be recipients of it. In the popular speech of Judaism, in the legends alike of Pharisees and the multitude, the word "paradise," as now among the followers of Mahomet, brought with it the imagery of sensuous enjoyment, of a region of fair trees and pleasant fruits and clear streams, and the soft south-west wind blowing for evermore. He, the Teacher, was leading his disciples to a more spiritual idea of the blessedness of the life to come—say, rather, of the life eternal—and therefore brought it before them under the aspect of a kingdom in which the supreme blessedness was to gaze upon the face of the King and to be made glad with the joy of his countenance. But that thought of a kingdom required in its turn a preparatory training; without some such teaching as that of the Sermon on the Mount, it was likely to suggest such a restored monarchy, having its seat at Jerusalem, as that of which Jewish zealots had dreamt and were yet dreaming; and, therefore, to that poor sufferer on the cross,—the wild outlaw, whose one element of religious life had, we may believe, been the hope, in childish years long past, of a garden of delight in which he should wander at his will,—He spake the word which gave comfort and hope, "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise."

And now the beloved disciple hears once more

the same word from the lips of the same Lord, in the highest moment of spiritual consciousness, as part of the apocalypse of eternal truths. So is it that extremes meet,—that the language of symbols meets the necessities of children and child-like souls, ceases often to attract or to edify those who are in an intermediate state of growth, and then, when the understanding is ripened and mere abstract ideas have done their work of formulating and defining, is found to be, after all, their best if not their only adequate exponent. The Christian of highest culture and most enlarged experience falls back upon the imagery of the Golden City and the Delectable Mountains, and the Paradise of God and the Tree of Life.

The revival of this last symbol in the pages of the Apocalypse is in many ways suggestive. Prominent as it had been in the primæval history, it had remained unnoticed in the teaching where we should most have looked for its presence,—in that of the Psalmist and Prophets of the Old Testament. Only in the Proverbs of Solomon had it been used in a sense half-allegorical and half-mystical. Wisdom was a “tree of life” to them that laid hold on her (*Prov. iii. 18*) ; and the same glorious predicate was affirmed of the fulfilment of the heart’s desire (*Prov. xiii. 12*) ; of the fruit of the righteous (*Prov. xi. 30*) ; of the wholesome and health-giving tongue (*Prov. xv. 4*). In connection with the revival of the symbol in the Apocalypse, it may be noted (1) that it was the natural sequel of the fresh prominence that had recently been given, as we have seen, to the thought of Paradise; and (2) that the writings of

Philo had specifically called attention to the tree of life as being the mystical type of the highest form of wisdom and of holiness—the fear of God ( $\theta\epsilonοσε\betaία$ ), by which the soul attains to immortality. We trace in other things at least the indirect influence of Philo's teaching on the thoughts and language of St. John; and as we must assume that all imagery is adapted, even in the words of the Divine Speaker, to the minds of those who hear, there seems no reason why we should not admit the working of that influence here.

It may be asked, however, What is the meaning of the symbol as thus used,—how are we to translate it into the language of mere abstract truth? And here, if I mistake not, the more developed form of the symbol at the close of the Apocalypse gives us the true answer: “The tree of life bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Rev. xxii. 2). The leaves and the fruit obviously represent, the one the full and direct, the other the partial and indirect, workings of that eternal life which St. John thought of as manifested in the Incarnate Word. The “healing of the nations,” the elevation of their standard of purity and holiness, of duty and of love,—this has been the work of that partial knowledge which the Church of Christ has been instrumental in diffusing. Its influence has counteracted the deadly working of the fruit of the other tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which we trace as due to a wisdom which is earthly, sensual, devilish. But to “eat of the fruit of the tree” implies a more complete fruition, a higher com-

munion and fellowship with the source of life. And here, therefore, I cannot but think that the promise of the Judge points to the truth that He is Himself, now as ever, the "exceeding great reward" of those that serve Him faithfully, that the symbol veils the truth that "this is life eternal, to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent" (John xvii. 3).

And that reward is promised "to him that overcometh." If anything were wanted to complete the evidence of a resemblance in thought and phrase in all the writings ascribed to the authorship of St. John, it would be the prominence of this word in all of them. Here it is the burden of every message. "I have overcome the world"—this was the assurance given to the disciples by their Master immediately before that prayer which, as the great High Priest of mankind, He offered up for them and all his people. The self-same word is echoed in the Epistles. To *overcome* the wicked one is the glory of the young men who are faithful to their calling (1 John ii. 13, 14),—"that which is born of God *overcometh* the world" (1 John v. 4). "This is the victory that *overcometh* the world, even our faith," the faith of him that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God (1 John v. 4, 5). In the other Gospels it occurs but once, and then with but little emphasis (Luke xi. 22). In the Epistles of St. Paul it meets us once only, and then in the simply ethical precept, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. xii. 21). It was reserved for St. John at once to record, to echo, and to develop throughout his writings the words which he had heard from his

Master's lips ; and through him they have become part of the inheritance of Christendom, and have carried, and will carry to the end of time, strength and comfort to every faithful soldier in that great warfare against evil in which Christ is the Captain of our salvation.

E. H. PLUMPTRE.

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THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

CHAPTER I. VERSE 18—CHAPTER II. VERSE 8.

IT is scarcely necessary to discuss the question whether the authoritative command which Paul now gives to his "child Timothy" could be any other than that which immediately follows. The use of the middle voice demands some recognition in our translation of verse 18. *This is my command to thee, child Timothy, one in harmony with (κατὰ) the prophecies which, when uttered over thee, went on before thee.*

This is one of the numerous hints furnished by the New Testament that the Lord appointed "prophets" as well as "teachers," "apostles," and "evangelists," in his Church. Some of the Christians at Corinth had received the "gift (charism) of prophecy." Prophets at Antioch were the mouthpieces of the Holy Ghost, and directed the missionary energies of the Church (Acts xiii. 1, 2). Agabus and the daughters of Philip prophesied, and thus a living voice uttered the mind of the Spirit (Acts xxi. 8-11). This method of Divine direction was probably referred to on other occasions, when the will of the Spirit was indicated as to the personal activities of the Apostle (Acts xvi. 6, 7).

The various references to this prophetic energy are as a matter of fact apparently limited to expectations and fears which governed the special duties of individuals. The prophecies were far-seeing penetrative glances into the life-work, responsibility, and destiny of certain men. The holy expectations formed by prophetic men about young Timothy when he was admitted into the Jewish Christian community, when he was ordained to be the companion and messenger of Paul, went on before him as "*avant-couriers, or heralds,*" of his useful and self-sacrificing life. We need not suppose that such prophecies have ceased. Ecclesiastical history is full of the records of similar predictions, whether or not they were feigned after the events which they were supposed to have anticipated. The story of every Church is enriched with these blessed hopes, these solemn warnings, these voices of the Spirit. More than this, there must ever be in the heart of the Christian Church a holy prophetic fervour, an outlook into the world, a forecasting of the future, a penetration into the mystery of godliness, which are not due to conclusions of mere sense or of unaided reason, which are nothing less than the free and gracious help given by the Holy Ghost. Now the prophecy which had been uttered over Timothy took the form of an injunction, and set before him an ideal. It was as follows, "*That in them, i.e., armed, decked, clothed in these prophetic hopes, these prayers of faith concerning thee, thou mightest war the good warfare,* discharge the entire duties of the military chieftain. The emphasis, as Huther admits, is on the words "in them." We may understand this emphasis by remembering that

no man ever does a great work for the world without a deep inward consciousness of his being predestined to do it. Cornelius à Lapide says, grandly, “The angels, the heavens, the stars, and all the creatures of his hands, are called his soldiers. He, their great Captain, is the Lord of hosts.” The life of Christian ministers must be a warfare with sin and the devil, and they are God’s warriors, and fight out his battle. Again and again Paul returns to the use of this imagery. The “good soldier,” and not the Levitical priest, military, and not sacerdotal, functions, supplied him with his most vivid illustrations of and truest parallels to the career of a minister of Christ. St. Basil said,—“A soldier does not build houses, nor purchase lands, nor study reward. He has his rations from the king, he pitches his tent in the open field, . . . . he can meet death if honoured by the royal smile. Come then, Christian soldier, let the thought of thy reward command thee.”

We probably are not justified in giving to the next word (*έχων*) the strong meaning of “holding” forth as a shield, or “grasping” as a sword, or “mooring on” to as an anchor,—but we press forward to “the faith and the good conscience” which Timothy is to “have” as the very condition of all success in his Christian warfare.

Without *faith*—faith in God, faith in the truth he proclaimed, faith in the cause he defended, faith in the Captain whose behests he executed—he must fail. “Conscience,” too must be “good,” because active, accurate, and ready in the discharge of its functions; and “good” because the testimony it bears is healthy and hopeful, because it is not defiled, nor offended,

nor seared, because its voice is the witness of the Spirit and the promise of the Father, God's own vicegerent, ministering reconciliation. "Which," viz., this "good conscience," "*certain persons*," reputed to be soldiers of Christ, "*have repudiated*," have deliberately rejected in their own case,<sup>1</sup> "*and made shipwreck concerning the faith*." There is no spiritual life without moral purity. If a man trifles with conscience he must not presume on faith saving him. His vessel is stranded. Now in verse 20, certain personal illustrations of this spiritual shipwreck are mentioned by name, viz., *Hymenæus* and *Alexander*. In the Second Epistle to Timothy (chap. ii. ver. 17), a man bearing the same name with the former of these two, and coupled with *Philetus*, is charged with disseminating the idea that the resurrection is already passed, and thus, by denying one of the great Christian anticipations of the future, with overthrowing the faith of some. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the same person is referred to in this verse. The strong measures taken by St. Paul may have been resented by *Hymenæus* and by *Alexander*, and they may both have gone to greater lengths in their antagonism to the discipline and doctrine of the Apostle. Thus, though the name "*Alexander*" was a common one, and the (*χαλκεύς*) "*coppersmith*" may have been another person altogether from the

<sup>1</sup> Schleiermacher contends that while Paul elsewhere uses the word in its active sense, and quite correctly, here he uses it of an object within the soul, and wrongly. It is true that the middle form of this verb is used by Homer and the LXX. of persons and in an active sense; but cf. Acts vii. 27-39; xiii. 46. The "*conscience*" is elsewhere spoken of as being offended, defiled, &c., and otherwise objectified.

backslider here denounced, it is fair to conjecture that the Alexander who, with "Hymenæus," was excommunicated by St. Paul, had endeavoured in after years to do him much evil, and was one of the Asiatics who were turned away from him.

This phrase, "*I delivered to Satan*," may be a mere formula for a solemn expulsion from the Church, and be compared with a like use of the phrase (1 Cor. v. 5), with the additional words (*εἰς ὀλεθρὸν τῆς σαρκὸς*), "for the punishment of the flesh." But one peculiarity of the apostolic regimen of the Churches ought not to be kept out of sight. The Apostles were gifted with terrible powers of destruction and chastisement as well as of healing. The cases of Ananias, Elymas, and the Corinthian adulterer are recorded, apparently with the purpose of revealing the awful fact, that while it was their privilege to heal disease, to cast out "devils," and to be the medium of conveying the miraculous and extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, they were also endowed with the faculty of administering signal chastisement and bodily suffering.

This delivery to Satan, whatever were its outward manifestations, was not an inevitable doom. Its purpose was "*that they might be instructed (or disciplined) not to blaspheme.*"

It is important to notice that this terrible power was an apostolic function as incommunicable as the power to impart the Holy Ghost, or to bear autoptic testimony to the resurrection of Christ.

The Greek particle (*εὖ*) that introduces the detailed injunctions with which Chapter ii. opens has been charged with the fault of implying a logical connection when none can be found. I can hardly go so far as to

say, with Bishop Ellicott, that the *οὐν* could not have been replaced by any other particle, that it is here used in its true resumptive force, and that the connection of this advice with the previous argument is perfectly easy. Yet I do not think it is impossible to discover the significance of this logical particle. Paul had called attention to "the faithful saying," that the Son of God had come into the world to save sinners. Timothy has been summoned to co-operate with him in this great work. Prayer for all men would lift the soul of Timothy into fellowship with the limitless love of God, who would have all men come to a knowledge of this truth. If Timothy should take the part of a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and should be armed with prophecy and shielded by faith for the great battle with sin, let him begin by praying for all men, because God loves all. If the verb *ποιεῖσθαι* be in the middle voice (Alford, Huther), the injunction is more personal, and links itself more obviously with the foregoing advice : "*I exhort you, in the first place, on the behalf of all men, to make petitions, prayers, supplications, and thanksgivings.*"

This fourfold exposition of the nature of intercessory prayer has induced commentators to aim at discriminating the terms, and very varied have been the results. A few of these efforts may help us to a fuller idea of the duty here enjoined on the Christian minister, as the front and beginning of his duty in the hour of his peril and anxiety. The old Greek commentators have restricted the first word to the deprecation of wrath, the second to the desire for benefit, and the third to a prayer for judgment to

fall upon the evil. Augustine (*Ep. lix.*) refers the four terms to the appropriate accompaniments of "holy communion;" *δεήσεις*, prayers before "consecration;" *προσευχὴς*, those that accompany the breaking of bread; *ἐντεύξεις*, those in which the Church invokes a blessing on herself; and *εὐχαριστίας*, the *gratiarum actio* at the conclusion. Calvin and Bengel say that *προσευχή* means *precatio* generally, and *δέησις*, *rogatio*, for some special benefit. Fritzsche and Trench come to nearly the same conclusion, that the main distinction between them is that *προσευχή* is used always of prayer to God, while *δέησις* is used also of prayer to man;<sup>1</sup> and *ἐντεύξις* is for personal, as well as relative, intercession. Though the words partially overlap one another, they are not perfectly equivalent, and in their combination they fill up the whole idea of prayer. The first gives prominence to the sense of need, the second to that of communion with God, the third lays emphasis on supplication for others, on the importunity of pleading which is appropriate to the man of God, while the last suggests that even the Christian missionary in a heathen city might not only plead, but give thanks for all men. It is difficult for us always to love all men, to think of *all* men as equally dear to God, or to regard all men as equally capable of being blessed. Timothy, after reading this letter, probably walked along the marble colonnade of the great temple of Artemis, or heard the hum of some twenty thousand

<sup>1</sup> Cf. German *Gebet* and *Bitte*. In Rom. x. 1 *δέησις* is equal to *ἐντεύξις*. See also 2 Cor. i. 19. *προσευχή* is joined with *δέησις* in Rom. i. 10; and in 1 Tim. iv. 5 the word *ἐντεύξις* is used very generally.

Asiatic Greeks crowded in the vast theatre to witness a gladiatorial fight, or encountered a procession of Bacchantes, or turned into the synagogue on the sides of Coressus, and saw the averted looks and felt the bitter hatred of some old friends. We, with some knowledge of the modern world, have to look into the “hells” upon earth, to survey the gold-fields and battle-fields, the African slave-hunts, the throngs and saloons of Pekin, Calcutta, and Paris, the dungeons of Naples, the monasteries of Tibet, and make prayers, petitions, intercessions, and thanksgivings, too, on behalf of *all* men. In the beginning of the gospel Timothy received this quiet injunction from the Apostle Paul. Now the once whispered word peals like the voice of many waters and mighty thunderings over the whole Church of God.

*Verse 2.*—Most unnecessary criticism has been hazarded upon the words, *ὑπὲρ βασιλέων*, “*on behalf of kings*.” Baur has said this is clear proof that the writer belongs to the time of the Antonines, before which period the singular noun would have been used. Ellicott replies justly, if this is to be pressed, the phrase would have been *ὑπὲρ τῶν βασιλέων*. The words, as they stand, do not point necessarily to the Roman emperors, but to the supreme authorities in the states or provinces in which Timothy’s lot might be cast. Christian catholicity is here contrasted with the narrowness of Jewish patriotism. Jews refused to pray for Roman governors,<sup>1</sup> an event which contributed to their final extinction as a nation.

The next clause is, and “*for all who are in an exalted position*.” Polybius and Josephus use

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, “B. J.” ii. 17. 2.

the same expression to denote a similar idea. The advice thus given was followed by the early Church, and from many sources come confirmations of the practice. One passage from Tertullian's "Apology" (Chap. xxx.) is well known. The testimony is noble, and I am tempted to transcribe a translation of it :

"We Christians, looking up to heaven with outspread hands, because they are free from stain ; with uncovered head, because there is nothing to make us blush ; without a prompter, because we pray from our hearts ; do intercede for all the emperors, that their lives may be prolonged, their government be secured to them, that their families may be preserved in safety, their senates faithful to them, their armies brave, the people honest, and the whole empire at peace, and for whatever other things are desired by the people or the Cæsar."<sup>1</sup>

The *ἱρα* that follows does not introduce the topic of the prayer, but the reason why intercession and thanksgiving are to be offered for kings and those in exalted station, viz.—"that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life, in all godliness and reverence." The word translated in this place "life" is, of course, not *ζωή*, but *βίος*. It is somewhat remarkable that in classical Greek the latter of these words connoted a moral element not involved in the former, while, in the New Testament, *βίος* is used for the pleasures of life, and the manner and support of daily existence. *Ζωή*, however, is used for the highest blessedness, and is ascribed to God Himself, probably because it is the great antithesis of *death*, and therefore of all sin. Here "life" is the "manner of existence," and it is Christian to desire that this be "tranquil and quiet,"<sup>2</sup> in reverence and godliness.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Justin, "Apol." ii. 64. Eusebius, "H. E." viii. 17, "Apos. Const." contain remarkable specimens of similar prayers.

<sup>2</sup> These words are found in classical Greek together.

St. Paul uses the word *εὐσέβεια* nine times in these epistles, but it is found also (Acts iii. 12) in one of St. Peter's speeches, and also in his Second Epistle. It is used for "piety," for the true practical emotion and legitimate exercises of sentiment and worship towards God; while the second word, in its adjectival form, is frequently met with in these epistles.<sup>1</sup> When we pass from the first century to the nineteenth, the wish becomes wider and deeper. Those who occupy exalted stations now, whose will has the greatest influence on the tranquil godliness of our daily life, are not merely our senators or great captains, our princes or statesmen. Our poets, scientists, and journalists, the men who rule opinion, control sentiment, govern fashion, and direct and criticize the thoughts of men, have more direct influence upon our peace than the so-called kings of the earth. Rather, *they* are kings for whom we should pray.

In *verse 3* the great idea of the first verse is resumed. "*For this*"—that prayer and thanksgiving be made for all men—"is good, excellent, beautiful in itself, and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour." So most commentators, De Wette, Ellicott, Heydenreich, and others. Huther, Alford, Wiesinger, however, make the *ἐνώπιον*, &c., refer to both adjectives, on the ground that it is thus undoubtedly used in 2 Cor. viii. 21. Since, however, that which is truly *καλὸν* is that which is in harmony with the Divine will, more strength of meaning is involved by bringing in the more comprehensive thought as a distinct utterance.

In commenting on Chap. i. 1, the usage of the  
<sup>1</sup> Cf. Phil. iv. 8.

phrase “God our Saviour” was discussed. It is peculiarly applicable here (verse 4), for the Apostle gives utterance to one of his grandest and most catholic thoughts of God:—*Who (says he) wills that all men should be saved, and should come to a full recognition of the truth.* The passage is full of suggestion, and has provoked much divergence of opinion. I will not discuss the interesting question of the relative meaning of θέλω and βούλομαι, and the diverse conclusions at which grammarians have arrived. It seems to me difficult, with Ellicott, to say dogmatically that the word θέλω does *not* mean “wish,” or “desire,” or to conclude that it necessarily means the act of volition. It undoubtedly does not limit itself to “wish.” Moreover, the “desire” of the Almighty must be indistinguishable from his “purpose.” It is more to the point to observe that the passive σωθῆναι, not the active form, σωσαί, is used in this sentence. The former word implies the presence of certain conditions affecting the fundamental “will” of God. “All men,” as far as provisions of mercy are concerned, *may* be saved. Even this way of looking at it was too difficult an idea for the older Predestinarians. Augustine (*Enchiridion*, cap. iii.) translated it “men of all classes”—“kings and common people, men and women.” Elsewhere he is troubled with the passage thus, “God willeth to save all men, *i.e.*, all who are saved.” In his *Liber de correptione et gratia*, c. 15, he grapples with the text in this fashion, “God wills that all men should be saved by teaching us to wish it.”

St. Thomas, Cajetan, and others—“Because God offers the gospel to all, He shews his willingness

to save all." Damascenus, Ambrose, Jerome, and others draw the distinction between the "antecedent" and "consequent" will of God—urging that the one precedes and the other follows upon God's foreknowledge and experience of human obstinacy or faith.

We cannot honestly restrict the expression in this way. It is true that the Apostle may not have been pondering the condition of the entire human race to the end of time, but he was laying down a principle which, if applicable to individuals in his own day would apply to all men at all subsequent epochs of the world's history. The distinct will of God is the "salvability" of all men, but in the same breath it is shewn that there are human conditions and means by which it is realized. All men are "to come," not to be driven "to a full knowledge of the truth."

Mack here asserts that God's eternal purpose was conditioned by his foreknowledge of the human worthiness and of the personal faith and obedience of those who should come. But surely we cannot say that the reasons of God's predestinations are revealed. It does not throw much light on this dark place to say that the "elect" in Paul's teaching *are* 'those who believe.' The question still returns, How is it that "some believe the things which are spoken and some believe not"? St. Paul shews how the two aspects of this great question find a solution in practical experience, when he said, "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal;" "The Lord knoweth them that are his;" and also this [seal], "Let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

*Verse 5.—*The *yàp* introduces a justification of the

previous assertion, and need not (as Mack *in loco*) be supposed to give a further reason for prayer on behalf of all men. Because God is one, and not two; because the Godhead is ONE for all men, and there is not one God for Greeks and another for Jews, one for patriarchs and another for apostles; one for kings and another for slaves; because God is one and the same, always, to all men and for ever, He wills that all men should be saved.

Further, because *there is also one Mediator between God and men*, or of God and men, *a man Christ Jesus*, God wills that all men should be saved; and Timothy is therefore urged to offer prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings for *all* men. We begin to see here the ground of the gratitude, and this becomes still more conspicuous in the next sentence.

The great and difficult text (Gal. iii. 20), "Now a mediator is not [a mediator] of one, but God is one,"—with its more than four hundred different interpretations,—does not appear to us to conflict with this grand utterance. In Gal. iii. 20, the *μεσίτης* does not refer to Christ, but to the general idea of a mediator, which might *seem* to be inconsistent with the fundamental position, GOD IS ONE, but which was not so in reality. The mediatorial relation spoken of there is that in which the mediator is indeed "one with God," so that the Law and the Promise are not at variance. There is "but one mediator" in the fullest sense, and at the same time "a mediator is not of *one*," but always involves two parties between whom the mediation is made. *Μεσίτης* is generally construed with the genitive of the parties who are thus brought into relation with each other. Christ is

Mediator because He blends two natures in his own. They were distant from each other, they were morally disunited and disconnected by sin; they were positively hostile. "The carnal mind was enmity against God." "The wrath of God was revealed against all ungodliness." Christ re-establishes the disturbed relationship.

"A man Christ Jesus" is thus declared to be the one Mediator between God and men. The word "God" surely means the same, and is used in the same sense in both clauses of this verse. Christ in his humanity is representative and manifestative of the whole Godhead — of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. His perfect humanity is the image of the invisible God. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

He is as much the effluence and organ of the Son, of the Logos, of the Spirit, as of the Father. He is the Mediator of the Father, because He is the Mediator of the Son, and because He gives and baptizes with the Holy Ghost. More than this, his perfect humanity is representative of the entire human race, *i.e.*, of all men; and hence in a sense in which it could not be spoken of Moses, or of the mediatorial sovereignty of the old covenant, or of any of those who, by faith and prayer, by reverence and sympathy, by likeness to God and fellowship with man, help to bridge the chasm between God and man. It must be allowed that Augustine, while admitting many "advocates," will not give them the name of mediators.<sup>1</sup> This is his name alone, "pro

<sup>1</sup> Cornelius, though he here takes occasion to argue in favour of the advocacy of the saints, gives (he says) the heretics the right-hand of fellowship in refusing the *name* of mediator to the saints.

quo nullus interpellat sed ipse pro omnibus, hic unus verusque Mediator."

In verse 6 the purposes subserved by the mediatorial functions of the humanity of Christ are furthermore described, but not the special constitution of his person. He is not here spoken of either as the Son of God or Son of man, but in his humanity, as the image of the Godhead and the representative of man. It is as such we are told : *He gave Himself to be ἀντίλυτρον υπὲρ πάντων, a ransom for all;* He gave Himself in one great voluntary act to be the ransom-price on behalf of all men. His advent in our flesh, his consciousness of our need, peril, temptation, and burden; the breaking of his heart under the crushing weight of all the sins He had taken upon Himself; his submission to suffering and death, and to the hiding of the Father's face, were his own voluntary acts, were the work and the utterance of the righteous love of the eternal Godhead to man, to *all mankind.* Independently of the Incarnation, the connection between God and man was simply due to the indestructible relation between Creator and creation. Men out of harmony with God have taken the punishment of their sins and alienation from God upon themselves, and they have perished in their sins. Christ accepted, in his Divine-human life, the whole of the conditions which bound sin and death together, and He broke the spell of sin, and exhausted the curse of death. *Ἀντίλυτρον* occurs only in this place, but in Matt. xx. 28 we have, "The Son of man came to give his life," *λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν;* and in Titus ii. 14 we have the verb—*λυτρώσηται.* The idea of *λύτρον* is a redemption

price of a slave or a captive; while *ἀντὶ* in composition and in ordinary regimen has the further idea of substitution, *ὑπὲρ* represents the object and direction of the act. It can be but an illustration of Christ's most wonderful work as Mediator, yet the peculiarity illustrated must be full of significance. The New Testament writers strain in various ways to compass an adequate expression of the meaning of Christ's life and death. If we confine ourselves here to the specialty of *this* representation, we must imagine the human race, all men, as held in cruel bondage, their will enslaved, their escape impossible by the evolution of natural laws, by their own effort, while the God-man, "the one Mediator between God and men," gives Himself, delivers Himself into their position of captivity, and peril, and curse—and their bondage is at an end. Of this mysterious fact Paul speaks in an elliptical fashion thus—*An event to be testified in its appropriate seasons.*<sup>1</sup>

Every saved man is a new testimony to the fact. The final sufficient testimony to it will be given in the spiritual and eternal world, where this grand stupendous work of the Mediator will be the appeal, the hope, the stability of all who have come to a "full knowledge of its truth."

*Verse 7.—Whereunto, i.e., for the purpose of giving this testimony in my own case, I was appointed a herald, an apostle, a teacher of the nations in faith and truth. I speak the truth; I lie not.* On this I

<sup>1</sup> There is difference of reading as to the text of this passage. A leaves out *τὸ μαρτύριον*. D, F, G, add *οὐ* before *τὸ*. Eleven MSS., according to Mack, read *τὸ μυστῆριον*, which are not, however, mentioned by Tischendorf or Tregelles. Cf., for the construction the apposition of a word with a sentence Rom. xii. 1.

need only observe that the ideas here used by the writer are thoroughly Pauline, though the precise phraseology is peculiar to the Pastoral Epistles.<sup>1</sup> He claims to be a solemnly-accredited messenger, an apostle in the fullest sense, a teacher of the nations, as distinct from the Jewish people, a privileged representative or herald of a Divine authority and love. By proclaiming the *truth*, he will help men to *faith*. Nor need he, in face of repeated denials of his apostolic claims, hesitate to asseverate and affirm the reality of his convictions.

In *verse 8* one is again tempted to discuss the difference between *βούλομαι* and *θέλω*, but I am content to say that, after comparing the classical and biblical usage, I believe that the distinction urged on the one side by Tittmann, on the other by Buttmann, cannot be maintained in New Testament Greek, that both words are used in certain senses interchangeably. In some cases *θέλω* cannot mean "will," as Matt. vii. 12; xxvii. 21; and in others it must mean purpose or determination, and is more than desire, Matt. xvii. 4. *βούλομαι* would seem to have the idea of *deliberation* essentially involved in it, yet often it cannot mean more than *wish*: as in Acts xvii. 20, so also here. Paul can counsel or desire, but he cannot purpose or will the conduct of others. The *οὖν* gathers the general argument of the previous verses together.

*I wish then that men* (perhaps used here in contradistinction to women, of whom he is then led on to speak) *in every place*, consecrated to the service and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 2 Tim. i. 11; 1 Cor. ix. 27; 2 Cor. iv. 5; and the frequent use of *κηρύσσω*.

worship of the Church, *should lift up undefiled hands, without wrath or disputatious distrust.* Paul describes the attitude of prayer,<sup>1</sup> and a condition of acceptable prayer. We cannot draw near to God with rebellious spirit, with angry passion, with "hands full of blood" or "bribes," *i.e.*, with defiled conscience and unrepented sin. It is in the desire for purity, in the spirit of forgiveness, and in the intensity of faith, that, because Christ is our Mediator and our Ransom, and the Eternal God loves us, and has testified the fact to us, we must draw near to Him. Thus the apostle justifies his main request, and reveals the intensity and reasonableness of his conviction, that "men ought always to pray and not to faint." The mightiest and the thoughtfulest of the teachers of the nations calls the world to prayer. The young evangelist, "first of all," is to pray for all; while all men everywhere are to lift up holy hands.

H. R. REYNOLDS.

### THE ATONEMENT.

IF, as we believe, Christ is both God and the Son of God; if, moreover, He is Man as well as God; and if this Son of God and Man has made a sacrifice in virtue of which the sin of the whole world is taken away,—then, surely, the Atonement effected by this mysterious Person must itself be a mystery the full import of which we cannot hope to fathom. No man, however wise, or learned, or devout, should affect to comprehend it; no man, whatever his

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Clem. Rom. i Ep. Cor. c. xxix; i Kings viii. 22; Psa. cxl. 2; Lam. ii. 19; iii. 41.

attainments, should venture to speak of it save with modesty and reverence, and with a profound conviction that he knows it "but in part," that he sees it but as "through a glass, darkly."

If any man object, "But why speak at all of so incomprehensible a mystery?" or, "How can you expect me to believe what I cannot understand?" the reply is obvious. Faith begins where knowledge ends; and knowledge soon ends, so soon that no man ever did live, no man can live, without faith. What we see and understand, that we know. Faith is that quality, or power, by which we apprehend and receive the things which are not seen, by which we venture out into the invisible and incomprehensible, assured that even there we shall find a solid path beneath our feet and a friendly Heaven above our heads. "Mysteries" are the proper objects of faith. We walk by faith only where we cannot walk by sight.

And, at the best, our knowledge is but a little island floating on, and amid, an infinite sea of mystery. Every natural phenomenon, every fact of experience, runs up, as we pursue it, into those great laws of Nature and Life whose modes of action we may be able to formulate, but of the essence of which we are wholly and hopelessly ignorant. Every rock, flower, tree, star, and much more every man, is but a manifestation in time, to sense, of those natural and vital laws which, in themselves, are an unsolved and insoluble mystery even to the wisest of our race. Were we to speak only of that which, in the full sense, we *know*, we should never open our lips; for we know nothing fully: all our knowledge

is but in part. We cannot follow any track of inquiry more than a few steps without reaching the farthest shore of our knowledge and launching out on that great deep of mystery which belts it round.

We know all things phenomenally, not really ; not as they are in themselves, but as they are manifested to us under the conditions of time and sense : and, always, our knowledge is bounded by mysteries at which we speedily arrive, and in which we are lost, unless indeed we are prepared to believe what we cannot see and define and formulate.

Now we may speak of the Atonement on precisely the same terms on which we may speak of any other topic which engages our thoughts. That is to say, we may take this great spiritual fact, or transaction, to have been proved by appropriate evidence ; we may say that this or that aspect of it has been manifested, or revealed, to us : and we must confess that, beyond and beneath all the aspects of it which we are able to grasp, there stretches an illimitable sea of mystery in which our thoughts are drowned, unless, indeed, they be inspired and upheld by faith ; for even on *this* sea of mystery, as of old on the darkened and wind-vexed sea of Galilee, He walks who can give us grace to walk with Him, if only we are not doubtful but believing.

And just now, when a single aspect of the Atonement is being earnestly pressed home on the thoughts of men as though it were a complete and satisfactory account of that great mystery of godliness, when the doctrine of the Cross is being robbed of much of its truth by being stripped of all its mystery, it is very necessary that we should speak about it, and frame

for ourselves the widest conceptions of it that we can. Any man who will speak frankly and modestly of what he himself has learned of it, and of the shape it has taken in his thoughts, may help to clear and enlarge the thoughts of his neighbours, whatever the point of view from which he approaches it.

Accordingly I venture to offer, as my contribution to the general stock of thought on this theme, a brief summary of the leading aspects of the Atonement revealed in the New Testament Scriptures, although I can only speak as a student and expositor of the Word, not as a scientific theologian. All I can do, all I wish and shall attempt to do in this paper, is to state in a simple and popular way those views of it to which I have been led by a careful study of Holy Writ, and which, as they have been helpful to my own faith, may, I trust, prove helpful to that of others.

But though I must needs speak as an expositor rather than as a theologian, I am not about to cite and discuss texts : for it is this habit of relying on scattered and isolated passages of Scripture, and on the letter of them rather than on the animating spirit, which has given rise to most of the errors and divisions of the Church. The letter killeth ; it is the spirit of Scripture which gives life to thought, as well as to souls. And it is to the animating and pervading spirit of the New Testament that I shall appeal. I am not thus evading a difficulty; I am, rather, creating one for myself. Proof passages might easily be quoted in abundance for every position I am about to maintain ; but I do not intend

to rely on these, but on certain large and general trains of thought which I feel sure no reader of the New Testament, whatever his theological prepossessions, can have failed to discover in it.

In the New Testament, then, I find three leading aspects of the Atonement wrought by Christ set forth,—not simply favoured by this passage or that, but interwoven with the very substance and whole extent of the Revelation it contains. These three aspects I may call, for want of simpler and happier terms, (1) the Metaphysical, (2) the Apocalyptic, and (3) the Ethical.

1. The *Metaphysical View*, or Aspect, of the Atonement. Beyond all question there is a large number of passages in the New Testament which speak of the Sacrifice of Christ as a ransom which He paid to deliver us from the captivities of Evil ; as a propitiation which He offered to a justly-offended God for the sin, or the sins, of the world : as a satisfaction which He rendered to the law of God, in virtue of which God can remain just while yet He justifies the ungodly. I don't cite these passages. There is no need. I affirm, without any fear of contradiction, that no man who has read the New Testament carefully and candidly has failed to find this view of the Atonement in it. It takes many forms ; it at once hides and discloses itself under many figures of speech ; it gives shape and substance to many passages and arguments, especially in the writings of St. Paul : but, above and beside all this, there is a *spirit* pervading the whole Christian Revelation which points stedfastly in this direc-

tion, and which no reader of spiritual discernment can possibly miss.

So far from having been missed, it is *this* aspect of the Atonement which the popular theology is apt to insist on as the only aspect, as containing in itself the whole doctrine of the Cross. Men are constantly invited and urged to trust in the propitiation offered to God once for all by Christ ; and assured that, if they do unfeignedly and heartily trust in it, their sins will be forgiven them, and they will be reconciled or atoned to God.

Now I am very far from denying, or even questioning, this aspect of the Atonement. On the contrary, I heartily affirm it. I acknowledge that it is taught in the Scriptures of the New Testament, taught more frequently even and in more varied forms than any other, and that it is therefore to be believed by all who accept Christ for their Teacher and Lord, even although they do not comprehend it. But I submit that it is not the only aspect of the doctrine, nor an aspect of it which, if it stand alone, can be urged on the faith and consciences of men without peril. It is the heavenward, not the earthward, aspect of the Atonement ; the side it turns to God, not the side it turns to man. It is a question of Divine metaphysics. It affects the inter-relations of the Father and the Son. It asserts that the Father, in or by the Son, did that in virtue of which He may justly forgive our offences against Him and his law. It implies — and the implication perplexes and baffles human reason — that, apart from the Sacrifice of the Cross, even the Love of God could not have gained access to us, that

our sins could not have been forgiven. In short, it is a great mystery; or, rather, it is a series of great mysteries which we cannot hope to fathom.

Glimpses into this mystery may be permitted us, nevertheless, and glimpses which reach, for aught that I can tell, to its very centre and heart. We may say, for example, that only as a satisfaction was rendered to the Divine Law which we had broken could that Law be vindicated and established in the respect of men. Or we may say that, in and through Christ, we are taught that obedience to that Law, even though it leads through suffering and death, is the only path to peace and blessedness, and that thus the law of God is not only vindicated, but glorified. Or we may say that since He who might justly have inflicted on us the penalties due to sin Himself endured them on our behalf, the revelation of the eternal righteousness of God was even more emphatic than it would have been had these penalties been exacted of those who had incurred them. Or, again, we may say that, as all men had sinned, it was necessary that He in whom all men are and live—the archetypal, all-comprehending Man—should obey for them all, that so, by the obedience of the One, the many disobedient might be made righteous. In many ways we may try to lessen the burden and pressure of this great mystery. But the more we brood over it, and the wiser we grow, and the clearer the light that falls on it, the more humbly do we confess that it is dark with excess of light, that it is so high we cannot attain to it, so wide that we cannot grasp it. All our endeavours do but land us in the conclusion, that we cannot hope to com-

prehend the relations which obtain among the Sacred Persons of the Blessed Trinity, or how those relations were modified, if indeed they were modified, by the incarnation and death of Christ. We can only say, "The New Testament, which teaches us all that we know of the Saviour, affirms that it is in virtue of his death that God can forgive and justify the ungodly; and therefore we believe it, and urge our neighbours to believe it."

That, in this aspect of it, the Atonement is a great mystery, an "unsearchable operation," must be admitted, if for no other reason, yet for this,—that during the last eighteen centuries at least three radically different theories of it have successively prevailed in the Church. But it would be none the less a mystery—rather, our reason as well as our faith would be still more severely tried, were this aspect of it not revealed. For there is a sense of justice in us which demands that the violated law of God should be vindicated, that his rectitude should be displayed as well as his love, that forgiveness should not be a mere act of grace wholly dissociated from the claims of righteousness. And in the Scriptures of the New Testament we are made to feel that this sense of justice is met and satisfied, though we cannot tell exactly how, by the fact that He died for our sins in whom we all died (2 Cor. v. 14), and rose again from the dead that we all might live in Him. Were it not in any way met, the mystery of the Atonement would only be a still more inscrutable mystery.

Nor, on the other hand, because we cannot solve the mystery which underlies the Atonement, are we

at all warranted in refusing to believe in that great Act. We cannot understand how two natures, the physical and the spiritual, can inhere in one person, or how the one is affected by the activity of the other; but we do not therefore refuse to believe that man has both a spiritual and a physical nature, and that each of these is affected in many subtle and intimate ways by its associate. Still less do we understand how there should be "three persons" in one God, and how the manifestation of God to the world in one of these Persons should affect their relations to each other and to men: but if there be an infinite God above us, how should we who are finite, and who touch unfathomable mysteries at every step, expect to comprehend Him and his ways? A God whom we *could* comprehend would be no God to us: He would be altogether such an one as ourselves.

2. But even faith must have something—something intelligible—to grasp. The great mysterious laws of Nature manifest themselves in phenomena which we can study and apprehend; it is as we study natural phenomena that we become aware of the laws and mysteries—mechanical, chemical, vital—which lie behind them. And, in like manner, the laws and mysteries of the spiritual world must have their phenomena, their intelligible outlines and aspects, on which our thoughts may fasten. Can we not find in the New Testament, then, other, and more intelligible, and more practical aspects of the Atonement than that at which we have just glanced? Assuredly we may. For in these Scriptures we find

what, for want of a simpler word, I have called the *Apocalyptic* view of it.

Now an "apocalypse" is an uncovering, an unveiling, of that which was before hidden and unseen. The Apocalypse of St. John is an uncovering, or unveiling, of the secrets of the heavenly, or spiritual, world. And the death of the Cross is an apocalypse, an unveiling, an uncovering, of the eternal love of God for men. Men, as we may see from the religions which preceded that of Christ, had come to doubt and distrust, if not to deny, that God loved them. They conceived of Him as an offended and austere Being, who needed to be placated or atoned by gifts and sacrifices before He would be gracious to them.<sup>1</sup> Christ came to convince them that they had misconceived the Father; to teach them that God would *make* the Atonement they had supposed Him to demand: to assure them that He had never ceased to love them, and that his love was of a quality which would bear wrong, distrust, enmity, death, and yet not loosen its hold. In short, He unveiled the hidden love of God; He shewed how far it would go, how much it would do and bear, in order that men might be redeemed from the miserable captivity of Sin, that they might be reconciled and restored to Him.

Here, again, I quote no texts; for here again there is no need. No one who has read the New Testament with any care will fail to recall many

<sup>1</sup> So far, therefore, is the "metaphysical" conception of the Atonement from being, as is sometimes alleged, alien or opposed to the natural reason of man, that men, when they had no Revelation to guide and instruct their thoughts, universally conceived of God as demanding precisely such an Atonement as this.

passages which speak of the Sacrifice of Christ as a manifestation of the love of God, as a proof that He so loved the world, even when it was at enmity against Him, that, to redeem the world, He spared not his only Son, but freely gave Him up for us all. No such reader but will frankly admit that this thought pervades it from end to end, and is affirmed, not by the letter only, but by the spirit of Scripture.<sup>1</sup>

Very well, then. Here is an intelligible aspect of the Atonement, one that soon runs up into mystery indeed if we pursue it, but, none the less, one that we can clearly apprehend, and the power of which we feel. We know what love is; we can conceive what the love of God must be like now that it has been revealed in Christ—how pure it must be, how strong, and how enduring. And as this second aspect of the Atonement is more intelligible than the first, so is it also the more practical of the two, the more influential on the hearts and lives of men. Tell them only that Christ has made a sacrifice which, in some mysterious way, justifies God in forgiving their sins, and, you may give them an instant and wonderful sense of relief, since if they believe that He who must otherwise have inflicted the penalties due to their sins Himself endured

<sup>1</sup> Of course it is not only the *love* of God that is revealed in the Death of Christ. That death, as has already been admitted, in a mysterious yet effective way reveals and vindicates the *righteousness* of God. And, no doubt, the completest mode of speaking of it would be to affirm that it reveals the entire nature, or character, of God. All I want to mark here is, that the New Testament does, constantly and with emphasis, affirm the death of Christ to be a manifestation, and the supreme manifestation, of the love of God (as, e.g., if texts *must* be cited, in the familiar passages, St. John iii. 16; Romans v. 8; 1 John iii. 16; and iv. 9, 10).

them on their behalf, they may well believe also that their sins are forgiven them: but however carefully you guard your doctrine, they are well-nigh sure to misconceive and abuse it, as they have done in the past,—assuming that, if they only believed that Christ made such a sacrifice, they needed to do no more; the guilt of their sins would be taken away, although their lives were not lifted out of the slough of sin and made clean and pure. But add this second aspect to the first; when you have told them that, for Christ's sake, God both can and will forgive them, tell them also that God gave his only and beloved Son to die for them in order to shew how much He loved them, how utterly willing He is to forgive and receive and bless them, and so soon as they feel the power and sweetness of this Divine love, their hearts spring up, and must needs spring up, to greet it with a responsive love, a love which, as we shall soon see, cleanses and uplifts their whole nature.

But before we pass on to the ethical aspect of the Atonement, I wish to emphasize a point too often overlooked: viz., that even the Sacrifice of Christ was but a temporal, though it is also the supreme, manifestation to men of a Love that *always* exists, and is always prepared, should need arise, to go as far and to do as much as when the Son of Man poured out his soul unto death. We are often told that in no age, and in no world, will the Sacrifice of Christ be repeated. And, possibly, that is true. It may be that the Sacrifice of Christ is a solitary act, which will never need to be repeated in any form, the effects of which extend, and for ever will extend,

throughout the universe. No similar manifestation of the Divine Love may be requisite at any period or in any sphere of being. But this, we should remember, is only a speculation, or, at best, a doubtful inference from ambiguous words. And the glorious fact is, that the Love which once manifested itself on the Cross still exists, and will for ever exist, and will, we may be sure, be manifested again and again, as the need for its manifestation recurs and varies. Notwithstanding our constant assertion of the eternity of God, we too much forget that He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; that what we see to be in Him at any single moment we may know to be in Him at every moment and for ever. That a Love capable of the utmost self-sacrifice was in Him once we learn from the Cross; and therefore we may be very sure that that very Love—Love as pure, as deep, as self-sacrificing—must always be in God, must in all ways and at all times be seeking to manifest itself to his creatures.

3. But even this second aspect of the Atonement is not without its dangers. Those who think of the Sacrifice of the Cross only as a manifestation of the Love of God may only too easily come to rely on that Love without responding to it, or may respond to it only with a weak sentiment which does not purify and ennable their lives. Indeed, the world has long sneered at the Church, or at certain members of the Church, as holding a creed which either persuades them that they may be relieved from the punishment of sin without being redeemed from sin itself, or which quickens in them a weak

puling sentiment incapable of producing in them the elements of a righteous and manly character. And, therefore, to the Metaphysical and the Apocalyptic, we must be careful to add the *Ethical* aspect of the Atonement.

Now this third aspect springs logically and naturally from the second. For when we once apprehend the love of God for us, a responsive love is kindled in us. And this love, if at least it be a true response, if, that is, it be like the love from which it springs, cannot be a mere sentiment easily divorced from righteousness; for in God love and righteousness are one: nay, according to the New Testament, love includes righteousness both in God and in man. "Love," we are told, "is the end of the Commandment," that to secure which it was given, and in which it rests. And, again, "Love is the fulfilling of the Law." And, again, "To love God with all our heart and our neighbour as ourself" is the whole duty, the whole righteousness, of man. So that the love inspired in us by the great revelation of the love of God is a strong and active affection, which cannot fail to draw us into conformity with the righteous will of God.

And that the quickening of this love within us is the proper effect of faith in the Atonement, I need not cite texts to prove. They are to be found in every page of the New Testament, and notably in that large and ill-understood class of passages which speaks of the blood of Christ as of a virtue to cleanse us from all sin. To many it would seem, from the kind of language they employ, that this cleansing virtue shapes itself as a chemical and detergent con-

stituent of the mere blood shed upon the Tree ! Others appear to assign this efficacy to the mere pain endured for men by the Son of Man—assuming what surely needs to be proved, that that which is physical is capable of being converted into moral equivalents, that mere bodily pain may become a spiritual power. Others virtually reduce the Sacrifice of Christ to the level of the sacrifices prescribed in the Mosaic economy, and imply that its virtue has an arbitrary source in a Divine ordinance,—forgetting that even the Old Testament pours contempt on all sacrifices save those of the will and the heart, save those which are personal, inward, spiritual. And, indeed, most persons of any refinement have so shrunk from the conventional and traditional uses of the phraseology which connects the redemption from sin with "*the blood of Christ*," that probably very few of them have paused to consider what the New Testament use of it means and implies.

It must be confessed that the metaphor of the phrase, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," like many other metaphors in the New Testament, is a broken and imperfect one,— the Apostles caring much more for exact expressions or comprehensive summaries of truth than to make a figure run on all fours, or to secure artistic beauty of style. To sprinkle, or wash, or plunge a man in blood is not the way to make him clean, but the way to make him foul. But, in the mind of the Apostles, the "blood" stood for the death, for the sacrifice, of Christ. The sacrifice of Christ was the supreme and consummate expression of the love of God for men. That love, when apprehended by faith, kindled a

corresponding love in them. When once this responsive affection was kindled in them, it drew them away from the sins by which they had offended God, and drew them toward the righteousness by which alone they could please Him. To the Apostles' minds, as any man who will *study* the Epistles of St. Paul and St. John may see for himself, the phrase, "The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin," was a brief summary of this comprehensive series of truths :—the blood stood for the sacrifice of Christ ; the sacrifice of Christ was a manifestation of the love of God ; that love kindled a love like itself in those who believed in it ; and this love, again, broke the power, and healed the wounds, and washed away the stains of sin.<sup>1</sup>

Rightly viewed, therefore, there is nothing in this doctrine to favour the thought of Salvation apart from Righteousness. Rather, the Atonement of Christ

<sup>1</sup> No doubt, in the mind of *Jewish* writers, this phrase, "the blood of Christ," &c., would contain an allusion to the legal cleansing, or acquittal, effected by the sacrifices offered in the Temple,—which sacrifices, be it remembered however, had no moral worth save as they were accompanied by repentance, faith, and the purpose of amendment and a yearning for the Divine love and help. I admit, too, that this allusion would be very prominent in the minds of the Apostles when they penned this phrase. All I contend for is that there is sufficient evidence in their Writings to shew that, when they endeavoured to get at the moral equivalents of that legal cleansing, to frame a conception of the way in which consciences defiled by sin and characters degraded by it were cleansed and raised, they pursued the line of thought indicated above. But even should this interpretation of the phrase be contested, the general argument in favour of an *ethical* aspect of the Atonement would remain untouched, since no theologian of any mark denies that the objective Atonement only reaches its end as it produces a subjective Atonement in us, we being made "partakers of Christ's death" and of his life,—the death to sins and the life of righteousness (see 2 Cor. v. 15, 17-21 ; Gal. i. 4 ; 1 Peter ii. 20-24).

is, according to the Scriptures, a revelation of the love of the righteous God designed to kindle the love and service of Righteousness in sinful men; it only produces its due effect on us when it "delivers us from this present evil world," since He "bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, might live unto righteousness." In fine, to be cleansed from all sin, to be made righteous by love for the loving and righteous will of God,—this, and nothing short of this, is the salvation offered to us in "the glorious gospel of the blessed God."

Now I am very far from saying that these three aspects of the Atonement—metaphysical, apocalyptic, ethical—embrace and exhaust *all* that the New Testament has to teach on this great and mysterious theme; doubtless there are other aspects of it which will yet reward the labour of those who dig in this sacred mine: but I submit that no view of the Atonement can possibly be regarded as complete which does not include at least these three aspects of it, since they are all clearly and obviously revealed in Holy Writ. And, further, I venture to ask all who teach and preach to consider which of these views needs just now to be urged the more earnestly and emphatically on the attention of the Church and the World? That it *is* necessary, now and always, to affirm that Christ offered Himself as a propitiation, in virtue of which God can forgive the sins of men without any departure from justice, without putting any slight on his violated law, I profoundly feel and frankly admit: wherefore else is the truth so clearly

and constantly affirmed in the New Testament? But in affirming and teaching this truth, we should be careful to speak with modesty and reverence, confessing how little we know of the mystery which underlies it. No man, however good or wise or erudite, should affect to comprehend it, to map out with accurate precision the several provinces of it occupied respectively by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; or imply that he has been admitted to the councils of the Sacred Trinity, and can tell exactly what effect the sacrifice of the Son produced on the mind of the Father, and in what way the death of the One gives life, or the prospect of life, to all. There is grave danger, if this aspect of the Atonement be insisted on solely or even unduly, that men will come to think of the Atonement as a mere legal transaction, which has no necessary or vital bearing on character, as obtaining for them a mere verdict of acquittal at the Divine Bar, instead of thinking of it as redeeming them from the tyranny and usurpation of sin.

On the other hand, if we go to men conscious of sin and longing to be delivered from it, and tell them that God so loved them that He can give Himself no rest till He has delivered them from the grasp of sin and made them righteous even as He Himself is righteous, and that He has given them full proof and assurance of this Divine redeeming Love in that He both gave his Son to suffer with and for them, and is ever seeking by his Spirit to make them like his Son:—are we not likely to address ourselves to the very sense of need of which they are conscious, and win them to meet the Love of God with a love

that shall constrain them to hate the sins which have alienated them from Him, and to practise themselves in the obedience which will bring them near to Him?

In the difficult and perplexing conditions under which we live, longing for gratifications and indulgences not to be procured without sin, and yet hating the misery and degradation which sin involves; shrinking from the effort requisite to doing that which is right, and yet conscious that right-doing is the only way to peace and blessedness, there is surely no Gospel so welcome, none so happily adjusted to our conditions, as that which assures us that the very God against whom we have sinned loves us, and, in his love, will help us to hate sin itself, and not only the misery and degradation it brings with it,—help us also to take and keep that path of righteousness in which alone we can find rest and peace. No thoughtful and noble-minded man can be content with mere exemption from the punishment he has deserved; much less can he be content to transfer that punishment to another who has not deserved it. What he wants, what we all want, even though as yet we know it not, is such a forgiveness of sins as shall really cleanse us from our sins and fix and establish us in the love and service of holiness. And this *is* the Gospel which, by the grace of God, is preached to us and to all men in the life and death of his Son.

CARPUS.

# THE EXPOSITOR.

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*THE HUNDRED-FOLD.*

ST. MARK X. 29, 30.

*A SERMON: BY THE LATE BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S.*

This saying of our Lord is also reported by St. Matthew, but more briefly, and with a remarkable variation: "Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." The words recorded by St. Matthew seem more simple and more easily intelligible than those which we read in St. Mark. They set before us the contrast between the good things of this world and those of the world to come. It is in the next life, in a future state, that those who have given up all that they most valued on earth, all the materials and conditions of their present happiness, are to receive their reward, in what the Apostle calls "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." This was the ground of the direction which our Lord gave to the young man who inquired of him the way to eternal life: "Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven."

This indeed was never understood by the Church as an absolute precept, binding everywhere and at all times upon all Christians. It was only regarded as what was called "a counsel of perfection," something without which it was barely possible to gain admission into the kingdom of heaven, and only to the lowest place in it. That which was to be left or given up was not an insurmountable obstacle in the way of salvation, but it was held greatly to retard the progress of those who walked therein. It was one of the *weights* which the Apostle exhorts the Hebrews to lay aside, that they might "run with patience the race that was set before them." It is that to which he refers under a different image when he says, "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life." Like the runner in the race, the soldier, if he be too heavily loaded, may sink to the ground before he has reached the end of his march. And the danger was not merely that of failure and loss, but involved far more fearful consequences. When Abraham, in the parable, reminds the unhappy, once rich, man: "Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented"—it might easily appear as if the comfort and the torment were the result, not so much of difference of character as of difference of condition in this life, between the two. Demas made a like fatal choice, and left behind him a like awful warning, when he forsook St. Paul, and so at the same time renounced all the blessings of the Gospel of Christ, "having loved this present world."

So far, then, though there may be room for difference of opinion as to the practical application of the doctrine, there is nothing obscure or difficult to understand in the statement itself. A sacrifice more or less painful is required, and an ample compensation is promised. This is an idea with which we are made familiar by every day's experience. This sacrifice of the present to the future is the condition of success in all the affairs of life. None of the great prizes of society which are open to competition can be won without labour and self-denial; and it is easy and natural to transfer this maxim from the secular to the spiritual order of things. It proved, indeed, only too easy and too natural, and thus became the occasion of pernicious error. But St. Mark, in the words of our text, presents an entirely different view of the subject. The recompense to be earned is not to be reserved for a future state, either for the glory of the heavenly kingdom or for a millennium on earth, but shall be received by every one who entitles himself to it "now in this time;" *now*, that is, immediately, at once; "*in this time*," before the advent of a new dispensation. The prospect of the future, indeed, is not shut out; it exceeds all that eye hath seen, or ear heard, or that it hath entered into the heart of man to desire or conceive. But it is not the whole; it is something superadded to the present recompense of reward; "*a hundredfold now in this time*," "*and in the world to come eternal life*."

But it cannot be denied that with this addition the words sound very strangely, and we have to consider, first, their meaning, and, then, their truth.

Heathen adversaries of the Gospel affected to understand them literally, as containing a promise that the very self-same things which were left or given up were to be restored with a hundred-fold increase, like seed committed to the ground; much in the same way that “the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning.” And perceiving that such a multiplication, though conceivable with regard to such things as lands and houses, was impossible when applied to persons, such as fathers and mothers, many treated the whole as an absurd extravagance. Their prejudices did not permit them to observe that there was nothing ridiculous in the case but their own misinterpretation, and that their objection only proved that they had grossly mistaken our Lord’s meaning. We can see clearly enough that the literal sense is inconsistent with the evidence of facts, with the first principles of Christ’s religion, and with the whole context.

In the primitive Church, while it was still a small society, many followed our Lord’s counsel of perfection. For a time, indeed, it became a general rule that “as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold and laid them down at the apostles’ feet;” and Barnabas is specially named among those who did so. He, having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet. It is true we have no reason to believe that this was done with a view to any future advantage, or from any personal motive; for the immediate object was that “distribution might be made unto every man according as he had need.” But this could not prevent it from falling

within the scope of Christ's promise. It was not the less a compliance with his will, a sacrifice made to Him, in his cause. Yet we know that neither Barnabas, nor any of those who so left or gave up their possessions for Christ's sake, received any earthly reward. He and they only exchanged plenty for poverty, ease and comfort for toil and hardship, safety for danger, in many cases a peaceful life for a violent and cruel death. This was so notorious that St. Paul could say, speaking from a worldly point of view, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

And then, again, if such had been indeed our Lord's teaching on this occasion, it would have been directly at variance with the whole tenor of his Gospel and the first principles of his religion. There would then have been no reason why the young inquirer should have gone away grieved because he had great possessions. He would have found comfort in the thought that if he parted with them for a time, it would be only to receive them again with superabundant increase. This was a prospect which would have offered the strongest attraction to the covetous, the ambitious, the worldly-minded, to all who were most utterly strangers to the life and character of Christ, to those of whom St. Paul could not speak without weeping, while he describes them as "enemies of the cross of Christ," who "*mind*," that is, set their affections on, "earthly things." We might be very sure even without any minute examination of our Lord's language that, whatever else was his meaning, it would not be this: that He could not have in-

tended to represent his religion as a kind of commercial speculation, grounded on a balance of profit and loss. He who bade his disciples "beware of covetousness," could not have designed to inflame the lust of gain by holding it out as the supreme object of desire and as the fittest reward for those who devoted themselves to his service.

Nor can it truly be said that there is not enough in the whole passage, taken by itself, to guard an attentive and unprejudiced hearer or reader against such a mistake. The promise has a condition attached to it, which, according to the literal interpretation, is either unintelligible or deprives it of all its value. The good things promised are to be accompanied "*with persecutions*." But who could imagine that those who are persecuted for their profession of religion will at the same time be enriched by it? And if this was possible, who would covet a benefit which was to be embittered by all the evils which make life wretched? We just now heard St. Paul's language, and we know what was his experience: how little encouraging to any who looked for the enjoyment of worldly happiness in a time of persecution!

But still it may be said, and it has been argued by some, that this is a distinction without a difference: that with regard to the principle of men's conduct, that which determines the real quality of their actions, it matters nothing whether the reward which they are led to expect is to be paid on this or on the other side the grave: that in both cases alike they do but receive the wages of the hireling, and in all that they do to earn it are governed by motives of

selfish interest, which, however they may disguise it from themselves, they have in common with the vilest of men. Here is a point which it is very important to understand aright; for the question touches the foundations of all religion and morality. We must bear in mind the terms of our Lord's promise. It was not made simply to those who should leave the things which were dearest to them upon earth, but on the farther condition that they should do so for the sake of Christ and the Gospel. And so we observe that, for the attainment of this promise, a disposition was required as different as possible from that with which men enter upon a dry calculation of profit and loss, weighing the present against the future in things of the same kind. Here that which is to be left belongs to a totally different order of things from that which is to be gained. On the one side is an object of desire; on the other side is an object of love.

Let us take an example or two to illustrate the difference between these two things. Demas forsook St. Paul, having, as the Apostle says, "loved this present world." But what kind of love was that? Does any one suppose that he loved it for its own sake, or any farther than he was able to turn it to account for his own benefit? And therefore the proper name for his affection was not *love*, but *covetousness*. Then mark the contrast between Demas and the Apostle whom he forsook. Of himself St. Paul could say: "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of

all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ." That was St. Paul's *covetousness*. That was the summit of his ambition. To him Christ was all in all. In Him he found enough to satisfy all the desires of his heart. But will any one say that he and Demas were at bottom equally selfish, only that as their inclinations differed, the one highly prizes that which the other made light of, their selfishness shewed itself in different ways? But this is just the test, and the only sure test, of every one's character. If you want to know what a man is, you must learn what are his inclinations, what are the things his mind is set upon, in a word, what he loves. The best man is he who loves the best things most, not he who—if that were possible—cares nothing about any, to whom therefore none can yield pleasure. The strongest love is the least selfish. The stronger it is, the more is self absorbed, buried, lost, in the beloved object. And this is a state of the highest happiness to all who are capable of tasting its sweetness. But whether they are or not is just that which will determine the place they are to occupy—on the right hand or the left, at the day of Judgment. I have reminded you of St. Paul. But the most perfect example of self-denial is that of Jesus Himself; and its fullest display that which He made when, "for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame." And remember that the thing which was set before Him, and which He kept so steadily in view that neither the pain nor the shame of the cross could for a moment ruffle the serenity of his soul, this "joy" was not the glory which He had

with the Father before the world was, and which He laid aside to take upon Him the form of a servant. It was the joy of his finished work, of perfect obedience to his Father's will for us men and for our salvation. Was that a selfish joy? Let us be assured that the more we partake of it the more will that mind be in us which was also in Christ Jesus; and that to be utterly strangers to it must shut us out from his kingdom and glory.

But there still remain some points which need to be explained before this text can be fully understood or rightly applied.

Many, taking the word "left" in a very narrow literal sense, think that the declaration only concerns the least numerous class of mankind, the possessors of houses and lands; and these again persuade themselves that it relates to times so long past, and to a state of things so different from that in which we live, that it no longer admits of any practical application. It may help to guard us from dangerous mistakes, and prevent us from treating this part of our Lord's teaching as a dead letter, if we observe that, strange as it may sound, there is a sense in which it is a most certain truth that a man may leave that which he keeps and keep that which he leaves. And there can be no doubt that this is the sense in which our Lord meant to be understood. For it is clear that He is speaking, not of a mere outward act, but of the disposition from which it proceeds. To leave all would be of no avail, even though it were outwardly to follow Christ, if it was done, not from true love to Him, but for the sake of the temporal advantages which He was expected to

dispense by those who, as was probably the case with Judas, believed that He came to set up an earthly kingdom. On the other hand, a man may in the same sense be properly said to *leave* that which he keeps in his own hands, if he no longer treats it as his own, but holds it as a trust, which he administers as God's steward for the good of his brethren. This truth was overlooked by many excellent persons, who felt their earthly possessions an encumbrance to their spiritual progress, and therefore believed that it was their duty to cast them away, forgetting that the burden was one which had been laid upon them by the providence of their heavenly Father, who was also able to supply them with strength sufficient to bear it; one therefore which they could not shift from themselves without presumption and unfaithfulness. And so let none imagine that there is less room for the practical application of this truth now than when it was first uttered. There may be nothing in our circumstances to require, or to justify, the abandonment of the station in which God has placed us, with whatever cares and perils may belong to it; but there will be never-ceasing occasions to shew the bent of our mind and will, whether the things to which we cling are such as weigh us down to earth or such as lift us heavenward. Few have an opportunity of making what appear to men great sacrifices, and that very rarely. But all are constantly called upon to make what to men seem small ones, but which in the sight of God may be very great, and all the greater because either entirely overlooked by men or attracting little of their admiration and applause.

Every day, and in all conditions of life, the question is continually arising: "Is this gain, this pleasure, this pursuit, this engagement, this recreation, conformable to the mind and law of Christ? And if not, are we ready to leave it, to put it from us, for his sake?" Then, you have Christ's word for it, you shall receive a hundred-fold.

But a hundred-fold of what? Not, as we have seen, of the things themselves, either now or at any future time; but a hundred-fold of that which gives them all their value, and without which they are utterly worthless; and that is the comfort and satisfaction which they yield. But this depends not on anything they are in themselves, but on the possessor's capacity of enjoying them. They are like a shred of paper, which may represent an immense sum of money, but is not worth picking up from the ground unless there be some one forthcoming to make good the promise it contains. What is the value of a rich inheritance when it falls in to a man on his death-bed? How gladly would he resign the whole for a medicine which would ease his pain or cheer him with the faintest hope of recovery! And we must remember that the question we have to decide is not simply whether we shall leave these things for Christ and his Gospel, but also whether we shall leave Christ and his Gospel for them. Whenever they are purchased at that price, they entirely change their character. They not only cease to yield any solid joy, but they become sources of unending bitterness.

And so we may see in what sense we are called upon to *leave*, not only things, but persons, who are

the objects of our tenderest natural affections : not only houses and lands, but brethren and sisters, father and mother, wife and children. It is not that we are to sever, if we could, the ties which bind us to them, and which are knit by God himself. It is not that we are to estrange ourselves from them, or to love them less dearly than before. But it is that we are to exchange a lower for a higher kind of love ; an instinct which we share with some of the lower creatures for the affection of a reasonable soul, which will be growing ever purer and stronger as we learn more and more to view them in the light of our common relation to Christ, not only as fellow-passengers on our earthly pilgrimage, but as fellow-heirs of a blessed immortality.

Yes, my brethren, only let Christ take up his rightful place, that is the foremost, in our hearts, and all things will fall into their proper order. Then we shall be ready to join in the Psalmist's prayer : "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness." Then we shall sympathize with his experience when he says, "The law of thy mouth is dearer unto me than thousands of gold and silver." Then we shall enter into the fulness of his meaning when he declares of the Lord's judgments or commandments, that "in keeping of them there is"—mark, not *for* keeping them, but *in* keeping of them, and not there *shall* be, but there *is*, now, in this time—"great reward." And so when He, who in the hour of his sharpest anguish looked down upon his mother with unutterable love, said, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and

his own life also, he cannot be my disciple," we shall not complain of that as a hard saying, to be interpreted as an injunction of unnatural hatred, any more than as an exhortation to suicide; but as a gracious warning, in every time of trial, when we are drawn different ways by conflicting motives, to choose that good part which shall not be taken away from us.

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## THE BOOK OF RUTH.

## IV.—IN THE THRESHING-FLOOR.

*Chapter iii. verses 1-18.*

It is somewhat difficult to handle the main incident of this Chapter. Not that there is any, even the faintest, touch of impurity in the Story itself. If, as we read it, we think of Ruth as guilty of an immodest boldness, or of Boaz as in any way lacking in manly honour and virtue, that can only be because we judge these ancient worthies by the standard of modern conventions, or because we ourselves are wanting in true delicacy and refinement. If we would do them justice, it is above all things requisite that we should carry our thoughts back through more than thirty centuries, and bear in mind the patriarchal simplicity of the manners and customs of that antique world in which they lived. An age in which the wealthy owner of a large and fertile estate would himself winnow barley, and sleep among the heaps of winnowed corn in an open threshing-floor, is, obviously, an age as different from this as it is remote from it. And Ruth, in creeping softly

to the resting-place of Boaz and nestling under the corner of his long robe, was simply making a legal claim in the approved manner of the time. No doubt the custom was a hazardous one; and we are expressly told that the heart of Boaz was "cheerful" with food and wine when Ruth came to him, to indicate both the risk she ran and the virtue of the man who was able to master both inclination and opportunity, even when they combined their forces in a single moment of temptation, rather than betray the confidence reposed in him. The very words which he addressed to her are reported, moreover, that we may catch their simple piety, the fatherly tenderness of the tone in which he spake to his "daughter," the pure devotion with which he invoked on her the blessing of God; and so be saved from any misconception whether of her conduct or of his.

There are but two words in the Chapter which call for detailed explanation; and in explaining these perhaps all may be said that the reader needs to enable him to peruse this section of the Story with an intelligent apprehension of its meaning. In the Hebrew these two words are *menuchah* and *goel*: *menuchah* means "rest," or, rather, "a place, or asylum, of rest;" and *goel* means "kinsman," or "redeemer," or "avenger," according to the connection in which it is found.

I. Let us take the word *Menuchah* first. Naomi said to Ruth (verse 1), "My daughter, shall I not seek a place [or an asylum] of rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?" What she meant by that question we learn from other passages of Holy Writ. For, in the Old Testament Scriptures, the word

*menuchah* is used to designate the asylum of honour, freedom, and peace which the Hebrew woman found in the house of her husband. The position of an unmarried woman in the ancient Oriental world was, as I have already remarked,<sup>1</sup> an unhappy one, so unhappy that, in some Oriental tribes, the birth of a girl brought no joy with it, but grief and lamentation; and even among the Hebrews the daughters counted for little; it was the sons, who could work for them and fight for them, in whom the family and the nation rejoiced. Only in the house of a husband was a woman sure of safety, respect, honour. And hence the Hebrews spake of the husband's home as the woman's *menuchah*, or place of rest, her secure and happy asylum from servitude, neglect, and license. In like manner they regarded a secure and hereditary possession of land as the *menuchah*, or rest, of a nation. Thus Moses said to the Children of Israel, when they wandered in the Wilderness, "Ye have not yet come unto *the rest* [*menuchah*] which the Lord your God giveth you:" by which he meant that they had no secure possession, no asylum of repose and freedom, no settled and well-defended inheritance, in the Desert; *that* was not their rest, but only the way to their rest. King Solomon was the first Hebrew chieftain who could bless God for the gift of a complete "rest" to his people. But as, in his reign, every man sat under his own vine and under his own fig-tree, none daring to make him afraid, he could thankfully acknowledge that the whole land had, at last, become the secure and tranquil inheritance of the

<sup>1</sup> See EXPOSITOR, vol. ii. p. 96.

Hebrew race. And hence, at the opening of the Temple, in his sublime dedicatory prayer, he said : “Blessed be the Lord who hath given *a rest* [*menuchah*] unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised.” The Prophets rose to a still higher conception and use of the word. For them, God Himself, God alone, was the true rest, or *menuchah*, of men. And hence they predicted that when God came, in the person of the Messiah, the golden days of Paradise would return, and the whole world would enter into its true *menuchah*, its final and glorious “rest.” When the Messiah came, when Christ dwelt among men, He invited the weary and the heavy-laden to come to Him, on the express ground that He was their *rest*; that in and with Him they would find such an asylum of freedom and honourable repose as the Hebrew wife found in her husband’s home; such a rest as the Hebrew race found in the promised land when it was wholly their own; nay, such a rest as the Prophets had taught them to look and hope for only in God.

This is the history of the word which Naomi uses in verse 1. When, on her way home from the Field of Moab, she was fain to bid her daughters-in-law farewell, she had prayed that, in return for their kindness to the dead and to her, “the Lord would grant them each to find *an asylum* in the house of” a new husband.<sup>1</sup> When, despite her entreaties and commands, they refused to leave her, she had had the hard task of warning them that no such asylum of rest would be open to them in the land of Israel;

<sup>1</sup> Chap. i. ver. 9.

that, if they *would* go with her, they must give up all the hopes which women held most dear, since the Hebrew law forbade the men of Israel to marry the daughters of Moab.<sup>1</sup> The prospect was too dark for Orpah's love to encounter; but Ruth clave unto Naomi, despite the darkness of her future lot. And, now, Naomi sees that the time is come in which the fidelity of Ruth may receive a reward beyond the reach of hope. Ruth is known "in all the Gate" *i.e.*, in all the city of Bethlehem, as "a good and brave woman,"<sup>2</sup> a woman distinguished by an heroic love and virtue. She has been recognized and blessed by Boaz himself as an Israelite indeed, as having "come to take shelter under the wings of the Lord God of Israel."<sup>3</sup> So that now Naomi sets herself, with courage and hope, to find a *menuchah*, an asylum of rest and honour, for the daughter who had clung to her with a love so rare. She knew, or suspected, perhaps, that Boaz looked with kindness, with respect and admiration, on Ruth. Perhaps, too, she knew of the two considerations which held him back from seeking a wife in Ruth. These considerations were, as we learn from this Chapter, first, that there was a nearer kinsman than himself, who had a prior legal claim on Ruth; and, secondly, that he was very much older than Ruth, and hesitated to place himself in the way of a more suitable and equal match.<sup>4</sup> The tone in which he addresses Ruth,— "my daughter,"—and the fact that he had observed she did not respond to the advances of any of the "young men, whether poor or rich," indicate that

<sup>1</sup> Chap. i. vers. 11-13.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. ii. ver. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. iii. ver. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. iii. ver. 10.

he was many years her senior, and had waited to see whether she would not select some man younger than himself, before he offered her a *menuchah*, or resting-place, in his house.<sup>1</sup>

It was, I suppose, this hesitation on the part of Boaz, and perhaps some glimpse of the generous and kindly motive that prompted it, which induced Naomi to resort to a decisive and somewhat dangerous expedient, although an expedient fully warranted by the law and custom of the time.

What the legal claim which stood in the way of Boaz was, and how the expedient of Naomi drove him to take immediate action, we shall better understand when we have looked at the second of the two notable words of this Chapter.

II. This word is *Goel*. Like the word *menuchah*, it has a history, and a history that runs on and up into the Hebrew conception of the Messiah. According to its derivation, *goel* means “one who unlooses”—unlooses that which has been bound and restores it to its original position. The *goel* did his duty, for example, if he redeemed a promissory note by paying it and handing it back to the man who had given it; or if he redeemed a piece of land by paying off the liens upon it and restoring it to its original owner; or if he redeemed a captive by paying his ransom and setting him free. So that the fundamental idea of a *goel* was that of a man who *redeemed*, or set loose, that which had in any way been bound.

This general conception was specialized in two different ways. (1) In virtue of an ancient custom in Israel, a custom sanctioned by the law of Moses,

\* Chap. iii. ver. 10.

when a man died without issue, his brother, or, if he had no brother, his nearest kinsman, was bound to marry his widow. This singular custom was based on a fine principle. Whatever the defects of their political economy, the ancient Hebrews firmly grasped a conviction which it were well that our modern statesmen held and acted on far more stedfastly than they do. They heartily believed that the true strength, wealth, and glory of a nation lay, not in the breadth of its possessions, nor in the victorious conduct of its wars, nor in the fortunes amassed by its citizens, but in its *men*, and in their manliness and virtue. And hence they would not lose a single man, if they could help it; and, above all, they would not suffer a single family to become extinct: for they knew that it is the families of a land, holding the ground held by their ancestors for many generations and trained in the habits of their pious fathers, which are the very heart and substance of the national life.

For myself, I wish we all held this conviction closer to our hearts. I never hear of the thousands who emigrate from our shores without a feeling of shame and regret that we are carelessly losing many of our most industrious and skilful citizens because, in this wealthy England of ours, they can earn no sufficient livelihood. A time may come when we shall only too bitterly rue what we have lost in losing our *men*; and, so far from taking any pride in hearing of the swarms which we annually throw off, I can but feel with how little wisdom we are ruled when the enormous wealth of the country cannot be so distributed as to ensure for every man

born into our midst a fair field and a due reward for his industry.

Among the many laws by which the Hebrew legislators sought to preserve their families from extinction was the law of the *goelim*, the law which made it incumbent on the nearest kinsman to take a childless widow to wife, and ordained that any son born of this marriage should inherit the name and possessions of the first husband. This kinsman was called the *goel* because, by "by raising up seed to his brother," he *redeemed* his brother's name and inheritance from being blotted out. It is easy to understand how in process of time this title came to be applied both to Jehovah and to Jesus. Jehovah was the *Redeemer* of Israel; for, again and again, He interposed to save them from captivity, or to ransom them when they had been carried away captive, and to preserve them a name and a place in the earth. Jesus is the *Redeemer* of the whole world; for when we were captive to divers lusts and groaning under the oppressions of Evil, the Son of Man proved Himself our true kinsman by paying a ransom for us and setting us free from our intolerable bonds.

(2) It is easy, moreover, to understand how the kinsman who redeemed had a dark and miserable counterpart in the kinsman who avenged. For the very man who was bound, by the ties of kinship, to keep his brother's name alive, was also bound, by the self-same ties, to avenge his brother if he were slain or wronged. Thus it came to pass that in the Bible the word "*goel*" is used both for the kinsman-redeemer and the kinsman-avenger, or "the avenger of blood."

These, then, are the two special meanings of the word *goel*: it means "one who redeems;" it also means "one who avenges." But it is only in the first and happier of these two senses that it is used in the Book of Ruth. Boaz was among the *goelim* of Naomi and Ruth. He was not *the goel*; for there was a nearer kinsman than he; but he was *a goel*, and if this nearer kinsman should refuse to do his duty, then Boaz might step in and do it for him.

Mark, then, how the case stands. On the one side we have the two noble women, Naomi and Ruth, both widows and both childless; on the other side we have the two men, Boaz and the unnamed kinsman, the latter of whom is bound, according to the Hebrew law, to take Naomi, or, if she should refuse, to take Ruth to wife, in order that the family of Elimelech may not perish out of the land. Of the women, Naomi has the first claim. How is she to shew that she waives her legal claim in favour of Ruth? Of the men, the unnamed kinsman has the first right to redeem. How is Naomi to indicate that she would prefer Boaz to this nearer kinsman? She achieves both points at a stroke by sending *Ruth* to make the claim instead of making it herself, and by sending her to make it of *Boaz* instead of the nearer kinsman. By sending Ruth, instead of going herself, she shewed that she waived her own prior claim; and by sending her to Boaz she shewed that she wished Boaz, rather than the next of kin, to play the part of *goel*.

This is, I believe, the true secret motive and reason of Ruth's hazardous adventure in the

threshing-floor of Boaz. Happily, the adventure, hazardous as it was, ran to a happy close. Ruth puts off her widow's weeds, arrays herself in holiday attire, to shew that the days of her mourning are past. She creeps, unseen, to the feet of Boaz, makes her claim in the usual form, thus constraining him to see her righted or himself to be put to shame. And Boaz is charmed to have the duty of the *goel* thrust upon him. He says to her, “Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter, *for thy latter kindness is better than thy former, inasmuch as thou didst not go after the young men, whether poor or rich.*” By which he meant, I suppose, that Ruth had shewn even a nobler fidelity and love in claiming his services as *goel* than in leaving her native land to follow and comfort Naomi. Had she been set on her own pleasure or advancement, with her strange foreign beauty she might easily, it would seem, have won to herself any of the young unmarried men of Bethlehem, and have gained a suitable and wealthy mate. But on Naomi’s bidding she had carefully observed the law of Israel, the law which bade her, as a childless widow, claim alliance with her husband’s kinsman. And in thus sacrificing the natural preference of a young and attractive woman, she had shewn even a finer kindness to Naomi and her family, and a nobler devotion to the law and God of the Hebrews, than in leaving Moab for Bethlehem.

But Boaz does not simply laud her fidelity and piety. He promises, he swears, that, should the nearer kinsman refuse the duty and honour, he

himself will redeem her dead husband's name and inheritance. Probably Boaz found it hard to utter the words, "There is a nearer *goel* than I;" for, obviously, by this time, as his allusion to "the young men" indicates, he was deeply attached to his fair young kinswoman. And it illustrates the nobility of his character, his honour and integrity, that he should propose to give this "nearer kinsman" his legal due, although to give it might cost him no small sacrifice. We may be sure, I think, that there was a good deal of quiet heroism in the words of Boaz: "Truly I am a *goel*; but there is a nearer *goel* than I. Tarry here to-night, and it shall be in the morning that if he will redeem thee, well; let him redeem: but if he will not redeem thee, then, as the Lord liveth, I will redeem thee."

In the morning, at break of day, before there was light enough for "a man to recognize his friend," they "rose up," that Ruth might be home before any one was stirring, lest any breath of suspicion should blow on the woman whom all the city pronounced to be as good as she was brave. Still farther to divert suspicion, Boaz bids Ruth take off her shawl and hold it out while he pours barley into it. When it is full, he lifts the load on to her head, and Ruth goes homeward, bearing her burden with a joyful heart. And now, should any early neighbour meet her, he will but think that she has been to fetch away her gleanings from the field of Boaz; he will only see what he has often seen before, a woman stepping lightly along beneath a load of grain.

But so much stress is laid (verses 15 and 17) on the number of measures which Boaz gave Ruth,—*six*,—and Ruth is so expressly told to take them to her mother-in-law, and numbers are so significantly used in the Bible, that we can hardly doubt that this emphasized *six* has a symbolical meaning which Naomi would be quick to read. If there were any such meaning in it, as probably to Hebrews there would be, it would be this: “The number *six* is the symbol of labour and service, and is followed by *seven*, the symbol of rest: for did not God make the heavens and the earth in six days, and rest from his labours on the seventh day? Was not the land of Israel diligently tilled for *six* years, and was not the seventh a sabbatical year, or year of rest?” Naomi, then, would probably find in the *six* measures of barley a hint that Ruth’s term of labour and service had come to an end, and that she was about to find, what Naomi had desired for her, a *rest* (*menuchah*) in the house of a husband.

Naomi seems to have read the symbol thus; for, in the last verse of the Chapter, she bids Ruth “stay at home,” as the Hebrew bride had to do until her affianced husband came to fetch her. In past years, when Elimelech and Boaz were friends and companions as well as kinsmen, Naomi had learned enough of the character of Boaz to be sure that he would not “let the grass grow under his feet,” that he “would not rest” till he had finished the matter of Ruth’s redemption and found her a “rest.”

S. COX.

*THE GRAPHIC AND DRAMATIC CHARACTER  
OF THE GOSPEL OF ST. MARK.*

Any inquiry which brings into prominence the independent character of the several Gospels cannot fail to be of value. It is useful for us to be shewn that we possess four distinct lives of Christ; for our manner of reading and speaking of the records which the Evangelists have left us, has some tendency to make us overlook their cumulative evidence concerning our Lord's life. Moreover, from regarding the Gospels as a single history, men feel less startled at some modern theories which set forth that one of them, at least, is little else than a compilation from the others, forgetting the great sacrifice which the acceptance of such theories involves. The Gospel of St. Mark has been subjected to attacks of this kind, which represent it as a late-made cento from the other two Synoptists. Yet there are some characteristics of style of frequent occurrence in the Second Gospel which seem sufficient by themselves to demonstrate the distinctive mental tone of its author, as well as the independence of the sources from which his information was drawn. Some of the marks which stamp this Gospel as in no wise a copy it is our present object to indicate and appraise.

As Christ's whole ministerial life was objective rather than subjective, as He went about doing good, there can be no lack, in any history of it, of much that would furnish material for the painter's skill to be exercised upon. Hence we have countless pictures of events in the Gospel history, imagination

sometimes supplying details where the Evangelists have said but little. But St. Mark's narrative is of itself pictorial. There is in it a wealth of word-painting, a whole picture at times being given in a single expression; and these touches of description, are often of such a kind as to proclaim that we have in the writer an eye-witness of the incidents which he is recording. We find many illustrations of this remark in the first Chapter of the Gospel. When recording, in verse 7, the testimony of John the Baptist to our Lord's mission, it is St. Mark alone who, to the mention of the loosing of the shoe-latchet, adds the graphic expression *to stoop down*. Yet how much more vivid and pictorial does that one word (for it is but one in the original) render the whole description. Again, in verse 10 there is a striking variation of the same nature, though the Authorized Version does but notice it in the margin. St. Matthew and St. Luke say only that the heavens were *opened* for the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the newly-baptized Jesus; with St. Mark they are *rent*, or *torn*, *asunder*: a pictorial expression which no mere copyist would have ventured to introduce. In the notice, brief though it be, of our Lord's temptation there is more than one sign of independent authorship. St. Mark alone tells us (verse 12) that Christ was *driven* into the wilderness to be tempted, and the horrors of the scene of the temptation are increased by the unique addition that He *was with the wild beasts*. All who knew the desert in which the temptation took place would be aware of these additional terrors of the forty days' trial; but it was another mind than that of St

Matthew or St. Luke which so realized the details of the picture as to bring these words into the description. And such expansions of the narrative are far beyond the province of a copyist or compiler. If we advance to verse 20 we find a similar characteristic addition. When James and John are called by our Lord, they are with their father in the ship. St. Mark alone makes mention of *the hired servants* who were with them. A notice of this kind, beside its graphic character, is instructive in another way. It narrows the circle of those from whom St. Mark could have derived his information. Such a matter of detail would have escaped all but an eye-witness; and at this early period of Christ's ministry such an eye-witness could hardly have been other than a disciple previously called: and that could be neither St. Matthew nor St. Luke.

We have observed already that there is much material for the artist in all the accounts of the life of Christ. But whenever a painter takes in hand a subject which is described by St. Mark, there is less call made upon his imagination for details than if he depend only on St. Matthew or St. Luke. The graphic mind of the Evangelist has already accomplished a portion of the artist's task and embodied it in his description. Look, for instance, at Raffaelle's cartoon of the Transfiguration, and see for how much the painter is indebted to St. Mark alone (ix. 2-29). All the Synoptists have recorded this event, as well as the healing of the lunatic child, which followed it, and which forms the subject of the lower half of the cartoon. But St. Mark's narrative may be recognized in it at once, by its features of characteristic description.

The shining garments of the Lord, exceeding white as snow, are with him *so as no fuller on earth can whiten them.* In the actual Transfiguration, the narrative is too solemn and brief to leave room for the display of individuality, though even here St. Mark is graphic in his statement: "and suddenly, *when they had looked about*, they saw no man," a feature of the story which is entirely wanting in the other Evangelists. But in the scene at the foot of the mount, St. Mark's peculiar style is abundantly apparent. To him alone we owe the mention of the Scribes assembled and questioning with the multitude, and of the eager running of the crowd to salute Jesus as He came near. He gives, in dramatic language, Christ's inquiry, and the distressed answer of the father of the demoniac boy. He alone records the details of the previous sufferings of the child and of the long-standing nature of the malady by which he is afflicted. He alone relates the attack which seized on him at the very moment he was brought before our Lord, the agony of which seizure the painter has so strikingly portrayed. With the same peculiar fulness the particulars of the cure are narrated. "When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him; and the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him, and he was as one dead, insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and he arose." We feel sure as we read these words, so abounding with minuteness of description, that we have before us the narrative

of one who was on the spot, and on whose mind the whole occurrence was impressed with the utmost vividness. We feel that he has left us the story with all those features in it which produced so powerful an effect upon himself. It is no mere adaptation of St. Matthew which we are perusing : it is the work of one who was of a different character from the Publican - Apostle, and abounds with strokes of word-painting with which there is nothing comparable to be found in the writings of St. Matthew.

Of a like character is the dramatic vividness with which St. Mark brings before us all the actors in such events as it has come within his province to notice. It is not enough for him to give in indirect narration the deeds of our Lord and the incidents by which they were accompanied. He places the whole scenes before us, and gives us the direct utterances of those concerned therein. Compare St. Mark's account of the execution of the Baptist (vi. 21-27) with that of St. Matthew. It is the former alone who mentions the *convenient day*, and the feast given to the lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee, as well as the *executioner* sent to behead the prophet in his prison. But, more than this, he puts the whole transaction which led to the execution into the form of actual dialogue: "The king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee. And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom. And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. And she came in

straightway *with haste* [notice this vivifying touch of peculiarity also] unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist." Nearly the whole of these words are peculiar to St. Mark, and bespeak a very different character both of receptivity and manner of narration from the record of his fellow-Evangelist. Whether St. Mark himself had been among the disciples of the Baptist, or whether his informant was some impulsive member of the band which followed John, we cannot decide ; but a perusal of this part of his record must shew us that, though the tamer story of St. Matthew might have been drawn from such a narrative as St Mark has left, the contrary process of elaboration, and elaboration of such a kind as this would be, is inconceivable.

The same remark applies to all the descriptions which our Evangelist has given. Vividness of detail and dramatic directness of utterance are, above all things, apparent in the style of this Gospel. In the instance just quoted, St. Matthew alone could be compared, but in the account of the miraculous stilling of the tempest on the Sea of Galilee we have the parallel narrative of St. Luke as well. And the same points of difference are noticeable as before. St. Mark (iv. 35-41) alone tells us that the dismissal of the disciples occurred *when the even was come*. He alone notices the *sending away of the multitude by the disciples*, and that, when this was done, they took Jesus with them *as he was*. The mention of the *other accompanying boats* is his alone, and so are the graphic words that tell how *the waves beat into the ship*. He specifies the precise place where the Master was

sleeping.—*in the hinder part of the ship asleep on a pillow.* The speech of the disciples, couched almost in terms of reproach, “*Carest thou not that we perish?*” and the words of rebuke to the raging element, “*Peace, be still,*” are found neither in St. Luke nor St. Matthew: and all these together form instances of word-painting and dramatic realization enough of themselves to rescue this Gospel from the suspicion of being a mere compilation.

Nor are the instances just adduced isolated examples. The whole Gospel is full of them, and at the risk of tediousness, though without any attempt at being exhaustive, some of the most striking of these shall be recorded. For the frequency of such peculiarities does perhaps more than anything else in them to stamp the writer of this Gospel as an independent witness to all that he relates of the life of our Lord.

Under the head of single touches of word-painting may be cited such as follow: how the paralytic brought to Jesus was *borne of four* (ii. 3); how our Lord *looked round about with anger* on the people who came to watch whether He would heal on the Sabbath-day the man with the withered hand (iii. 5); how, when walking on the sea, *He would have passed by* the ship of his disciples (vi. 48); how he was seated *over against the treasury* when the poor widow cast in her two mites (xii. 41); and how *He called his disciples unto Him* that He might teach them the lesson to which her sacrifice was so well calculated to give point (xii. 43). Here, too, we may observe how full this Gospel is of local notices. The writer hardly ever fails to mention *where* it was,

on the way or in the house, that the events took place of which he speaks. Thus (viii. 27) it was *by the way* to the towns of Cæsarea Philippi that our Lord discoursed with his disciples of whom men said that He was. So of the conversations about his coming death (x. 32) *as they were on the way going up to Jerusalem*, and about the end of the world (xiii. 3) *as He sat upon the Mount of Olives over against the temple*. St. Mark alone records the hour of the crucifixion (xv. 25),—*and it was the third hour and they crucified him*; and also tells us (xiv. 11) of the gladness of the chief priests when they learnt that Judas would betray his master. To him alone we owe the notice (xv. 8) that *the multitude, crying aloud, began to desire Pilate to do as he had ever done unto them*. In the account of the burial of the Lord, he is singular in his mention of the *boldness* of Joseph of Arimathea, and of the *marvel* of Pilate if Christ were already dead, and of *his summons and inquiry about the matter from the Centurion* (xv. 43 44). As one vividly cognizant of all the slight details of these events he alone alludes to the *purchase* of the fine linen by Joseph (xv. 46), and of the spices for anointing the Lord's body by the women who came to the sepulchre (xvi. 1). In this last scene, too, he is like himself in mentioning that it took place *at the rising of the sun* (xvi. 2), and he makes vivid the incident by a direct record of the questioning words of the women (xvi. 3), “*Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?*” a detail which is noticed neither by the Synoptists nor by St. John.

It is worthy of mention also that St. Mark dwells

more at length and more graphically than the other Evangelists on the crowding to Christ of those who wished to be healed. Look at Chap. iii. vers. 9, 10: "And he spake to his disciples that a small boat should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him; for he had healed many, insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues." Then in verse 20: "And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread;" and, lower down, verse 32, the crowd is described as *sitting round about Him*. There is much more of a picture, too, in St. Mark than elsewhere when our Saviour gives (ix. 36) his lesson to the disciples against ambition. "He took a child and set him in the midst of them, and *when he had taken him in his arms* he said unto them, Whosoever," &c. Still more life-like is the description (x. 16) where the little children are brought to Jesus: "And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." In all these cases the pictorial details are St. Mark's alone, as also in the last-quoted passage is the notice that Christ *was much displeased* with those who would have kept the children from Him.

In the narrative of the solemn entry into Jerusalem (given in Chap. xi.) touches of the same distinctive character are numerous, as in the minute description of the position of the ass and the colt which were to be brought to Jesus,—*They found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met.* So it is noticed here alone that it was *when eventide was come* that Christ went away again with the Twelve to Bethany: that it was

as far off that on the next morning He beheld the barren fig-tree, and that *the time of figs was not yet*: also that the disciples *heard* the curse which Jesus pronounced against its barrenness. It is from St. Mark we learn that Christ *would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple*, and that it was *on the following morning*, as they came to Jerusalem again, that *they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots*: a point in the narrative which is needed to explain what is meant by St. Matthew's words "and presently the fig-tree withered away," but which is utterly inconsistent with the idea that St. Mark was abridging the account given in the First Gospel.

By this Evangelist alone is it mentioned (xi. 21) that it was St. Peter who called the attention of our Lord to the prompt fulfilment of his curse, and so gave rise to the conversation which follows on the power of faith; and, quite in accordance with his custom, and his only, the writer notices (xi. 27) that it was *as Christ was walking in the temple* that the chief priests, scribes, and elders came unto Him.

A characteristic addition, and one which is of importance, as it proves that the author was writing for persons who lived during the time of the events which he relates, is to be found (xv. 21) in the mention of Simon the Cyrenian. St. Mark alone tells us that Simon was *the father of Alexander and Rufus*. Such an explanation could be of no use except to contemporaries to whom the men thus briefly indicated were well known. But while thus undesignedly pointing to the early date of the

Gospel, the addition is quite in St. Mark's manner, whom the mention of the father reminds of the sons; and they are named to give completeness to the picture that was present to his mind as he wrote.

Let us pass to fuller examples of the style of our Evangelist. Notice the word-painting in his account of the Gadarene demoniac in Chapter v. How much of the details there given are absent from St. Matthew's narrative as well as from St. Luke's! "And no man could bind him, no, not with chains; because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces, neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him." Hardly a word of all this is in the other two Gospels, and it is difficult to understand how any but an eye-witness of the occurrence could have given such a description of it. St. Matthew's short notice of the miracle, and the somewhat longer one of St. Luke, may have been the recollections of a reported event, but St. Mark's narrative is far more than this. Whether the Evangelist himself beheld what he records, or was writing from the lips of another, the spirit of the eye-witness has infused itself into the whole narrative, leaving its mark even in such touches as the mention of the number of the swine destroyed in the waters of the Sea of Galilee. And the case is the same with almost every event to

which he refers. Not to go beyond this very Chapter v., how much more circumstantial than in the other Gospels is the story of the healing of the bloody issue, and of the raising of Jaïrus's daughter! Nowhere else are we told how *Jesus looked round about to see the woman who had touched him*, and how, beside his loving dismissal, "Go in peace," he added, for her instant comfort, "and be whole of thy plague." The description, too, of them that wept and wailed over the ruler's daughter is much more graphic (particularly in the Original), and greater reality is given to the picture by the record of the very words spoken, "Talitha cumi," and by the note which bespeaks the eye-witness, "For the damsel was *of the age of twelve years.*"

In the next Chapter (vi.) the same richness of detail is noticeable in the account of the return of the Twelve from their first mission. St. Mark is alone in noticing our Lord's anxiety for the repose of his apostles, *as there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.* As the story proceeds with an account of the assembled crowds whom Christ immediately fed by a miracle, the unique picturesqueness of the details is more abundantly apparent: "And the people saw them departing, and many knew him and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him. And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd." There follows next in greater amplitude

than elsewhere the dialogue of our Lord with his apostles about the feeding of such a crowd, and a much more graphic notice than the other Gospels furnish of the arrangement of the people to be fed, where the artist's eye of our Evangelist or his informant has alone observed and noted the *greenness* of the grass on which they were made to sit down, and that they were ranged in "ranks, by hundreds and by fifties," or, as the Greek word implies, were so placed and grouped that, in their orderly arrangement and bright many-coloured garments, they looked like *flower-beds* on the green grass. We need not pursue this part of our illustration further; the reader will find the same characteristics in every Chapter, nay, within every dozen verses.

Of the writer's love for making his characters speak for themselves wherever he can do so, some notices have been already given. This feature also can be traced throughout the whole Gospel, and it will be enough if we call attention to two or three additional instances of it.

In Chap. xii. vers. 28-34 is the account of the interview of our Lord with the Scribe who came to question Him on the chief commandment in the law. St. Matthew (xxii. 34-40) has a notice of this same event, and a comparison of the two descriptions will shew at once how much more vividly the dramatic form, into which St. Mark casts his story, brings the occurrence before his readers, while indicating at the same time a more lively realization of the whole scene on the part of the narrator. Look, too, at the greater vigour which the direct language of the speakers,

as St. Mark has alone recorded it, gives to the discourse (xiii. 1 seqq.) which our Lord held with his disciples after his final departure from the Temple. "Master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings are here;" and the whole of the following verses might be quoted, if space permitted, both as apt instances of details which are peculiar to the Author of the Second Gospel and as an example of the greater vividness which his treatment of it has imparted to the history.

Enough has been said to demonstrate that there occur throughout the whole of this Gospel such tokens of independent authorship as effectually to negative the idea that its author was merely an abridger and a copyist. The graphic character of a great part of his language marks him as a recorder of independent observations, and the manner in which he has at times treated his subject is such as no mere imitator or condenser could have attained. The same peculiarities are apparent in his record of those few events which are unmentioned by the other Evangelists. In Chap. vii. vers. 31-37 the account of the cure of the deaf and dumb man, wrought as our Lord returned from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, is full of such graphic touches as we have been noticing. So, too, are those few words (xiv. 51, 52), in the scene of Christ's desertion by his disciples, which some have thought to refer to St. Mark himself: "And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him, and he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked."

It is worth while to observe on the closing verses of this Gospel (xvi. 9-20), about the genuineness of which there has been much controversy, that in them we do not find so much of what we have pointed out as St. Mark's peculiar style as we should have expected. Perhaps in such a mere summary of our Lord's appearances after his resurrection such traces are not to be expected; yet there is hardly a passage of equal length in the whole Gospel wherein the individual characteristics of the author's style may not be detected.

We have pointed out that much of the detail which St. Mark has introduced into his Gospel could only have been gathered from an eye-witness, some of it only from a disciple who was among the first whom Christ called. Whether an examination of such language of St. Peter as is recorded in the other Gospels, and in the Acts, would lead us to the conclusion that *he* was the informant from whose observation our Evangelist drew his descriptions is a very interesting inquiry, but one on which we cannot now enter. It would also be profitable to investigate in this light the language of St. Peter's Epistles, and such investigation might add something to the evidence of the genuineness of the second of those Epistles, in which there is certainly no lack of graphic features such as we have been considering. But such an inquiry is not for this time.

We cannot, however, conclude without observing that the freshness of all the details which occur in this Gospel, is such as to carry it back to a very early date. Even to an eye-witness, slight points, well impressed on the mind at first, soon become

confused and indistinct. The very minute peculiarities which abound in St. Mark's Gospel force on us the conclusion either that it was the earliest written of all the Gospels, or that the notes from which St. Mark drew his information had been recorded very near to the time when each event took place. In either case we possess in this book the record which, of all the New Testament writings, is most nearly contemporary with our Lord's life.

But this remark is made by the way. The object of the present inquiry has been answered if the independent authorship of St. Mark's Gospel has been made plainer by it. For if it has been sufficiently shewn that the writer who so preferred, as St. Mark did, direct to indirect narration, was one who had vividly realized for himself the events which he records, and, while speaking of the same matters as the other Evangelists, betrays in every page his own individuality; that, so far from abridging what he has given us, he, in most cases, expands it, and that in a most striking manner, and in such wise as no mere copyist or compiler would have been able or have ventured to do: and that he writes in such a way, knowing that his composition would come under the inspection of persons who were contemporary with the events which he describes, we can have little doubt that the conclusion of the reader will be that the Gospel of St. Mark is no compilation, but an original, and it may be the earliest, record of the life of Christ.

J. RAWSON LUMBY.

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*THE PROLOGUE OF ST JOHNS GOSPEL.*

## III.—THE TRUTH AND IMPORTANCE OF THE CONCEPTION OF THE PERSON OF JESUS CONTAINED IN THE PROLOGUE.

THE Prologue of John, then, teaches nothing new respecting the Person of Jesus. It merely recapitulates the testimony which Jesus gave concerning Himself, and formulates it in a striking expression which has profoundly impressed the mind of the Church. Consequently, nothing can be more erroneous than to exhibit the relation of the Christ of the Synoptics to the Christ of Paul and to the Christ of John, as a series of superadded creations which have appeared one after the other in the Church. The very highest conception, that which is richest and most complete, was also the first; it was the consciousness which Christ had of Himself. This consciousness has left its indelible impress on a number of testimonies that fell from his lips; and these testimonies have been collected and preserved more or less perfectly in the different documents which are said to exhibit opposite views, but which really supplement each other. The fact is, that the Church has never experienced the least difficulty in combining into one and the same view the Christ of the Synoptics and the Christ of Paul and of John, notwithstanding the shades of difference which distinguish them. There is contrast, doubtless, as there always is where there is richness; but the alleged contradictions exist only for scholars more intent upon displaying their own acuteness, though at the

expense of the subject of their studies, than upon giving it due prominence by ignoring themselves. Just as with the different pictures which photography produces of the same person, in which the eye of an acquaintance, notwithstanding their diversity, always recognizes his friend, so the different portraiture of the Christ of the Gospel all present to the eye of a simple faith the same fundamental type, and this type cannot apparently be any other than that which Jesus bore within Him, and which He has graven with a firm and courageous hand on the hearts of his disciples. We say courageous, because it was this testimony to his divinity which cost Him his life: He died—the Synoptics no less than St. John testify this—as a blasphemer, and because He made Himself not only Messiah,—there would have been no blasphemy in that,—but Son of God in the highest sense of the word; and the sole question, where Jesus Christ is concerned, will henceforth be that which every page of M. Rénan's work makes the real issue: Whether, in declaring Himself God, He affirmed the truth, or was only the first dupe of his own exaggerated enthusiasm and pride? Whether He is the Word made flesh, as is implied in all his discourses, from the Sermon on the Mount (comp. Matt. vii. 21–23) to his sacerdotal prayer, or merely, forsooth, a pious fool, whose only distinction from others like him is that his folly has made a greater noise?

Apart from the general question of the supernatural and miracles, which we cannot discuss here, three principal objections are made to the conception so clearly enunciated in the Prologue, and especially

to the notion of the pre-existence and eternity of the Logos.

1. An argument is based on certain alleged inconsistencies in John's views. Thus M. Reuss<sup>1</sup> sees a contradiction between the Prologue, which teaches, he says, the perfect equality of the Father and the Son, in accordance with the confession of ecclesiastical orthodoxy, and those numerous sayings of Jesus, in the Gospel of St. John himself, which contain the idea of the subordination of the Son to the Father. In the doctrine of equality and the words in which it is expressed, he finds evidence of the influence of the schools and of Philo; in the passages which teach the subordination he recognizes the statements which really emanated from Christ's lips. John must have failed to perceive the contradiction between these elements of opposite meaning and diverse origin.

2. Baur<sup>2</sup> lays great stress on the impossibility of reconciling the notion of the incarnation of the Word with the idea of the supernatural birth of Jesus, which is found in the Synoptics. According to the view of the latter, it is by this birth that the subject of the Gospel history begins to exist. From the point of view of the incarnation, on the contrary, this subject was in existence previous to his appearing, and can become nothing which He was not already. "It is absolutely impossible"—this is his conclusion—"to find a place for the birth in the series of facts indicated by the Prologue."

3. Another objection to the fact of the incarnation

<sup>1</sup> "Hist de la Théol. Chrét.," t. ii. p. 350, et seq.

<sup>2</sup> "Theol. Jahrb.," 1844, t. iii. p. 24, et seq.

is the alleged impossibility of reconciling it with the real humanity of the Saviour. This is the view taken by Lücke,<sup>1</sup> who, while recognizing the perilousness of denying the pre-existence, cannot, nevertheless, make up his mind to admit a fact which would establish a difference of essence between the Saviour and his brethren, and make it impossible to conceive of his being the Son of Man, or his accomplishing the work of redemption. The difficulties of Weizsäcker<sup>2</sup> proceed from the same point of view: Doubtless, the fellowship of the Son with the Father is not simply moral; He does not win his position as Son by his fidelity, it is pre-supposed in all that He did and said; his fidelity only preserves this original relation, it does not create it; it is the unacquired condition of the consciousness which He has of Himself. But, on the other hand, it must be admitted that the higher knowledge which Christ possessed cannot be the continuation of an anterior knowledge brought from above, otherwise it could not have had that progressive character, limited to the requirements of the moment, which we see in it, and which constitute it a truly human knowledge. And as to the moral task of Jesus, on this condition there would have been nothing human about it; for what room would there be for real moral conflict in the Son if He still retained that complete knowledge of the Divine plan which He had in eternity with the Father?<sup>3</sup> After being at much pains to eliminate the idea of

<sup>1</sup> T. i. p. 378.

<sup>2</sup> "Jahrb. fur deutsche Theol." t. vii., fourth ed., p. 655-664.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 639.

pre-existence from the words of Jesus quoted above, Weizsäcker nevertheless concludes that in the Fourth Gospel we have two Christs,—one truly human, exhibited in the teaching of Jesus and in the Synoptics, the other pre-existent, the Christ of John. We are thus brought back to the alleged inconsistencies which M. Reuss attributes to the Christology of the Fourth Gospel.

To reply to these objections: 1. We believe that the inherent contradiction with which the Gospel of John is charged by M. Reuss is only apparent, and arises from his attributing to the Apostle the so-called orthodox dogma formulated in the Nicene Creed, instead of permitting him to speak for himself. In fact, the Prologue teaches the subordination of the Son to the Father as positively as the rest of the Gospel. We have proved it by exegesis. The expression *was with God*, the reservation of the name of God as a substantive (*ό θεός*) to the Father, the idea of begetting contained in the word *μονογενῆς* (combined as it is in verse 14 with the word *πατήρ*), the very terms Father and Son and Word, the figure, *in the bosom of the Father*, the Father being set forth as the supreme object of knowledge, whilst the Son is only the organ of it—all these are so many indications which leave no doubt as to the opinion of the Author of the Prologue respecting the subordination, and they establish the most perfect agreement between this portion and the rest of the Gospel.

2. The objection of Baur, drawn from the disagreement of the notion of the incarnation with that of the miraculous birth, like the preceding objection of M. Reuss, proceeds from his not having kept

sufficiently close to the expressions of the Prologue. Setting out with the preconceived idea that the subject of the evangelical history, according to the Fourth Gospel, is the Word, purely and simply, and that these words, "*The Word became flesh*," signify solely that from being invisible the Word has become visible, it is very evident that Baur will not find room in the Prologue for the idea of a miraculous birth, or, we must add, for any birth at all, miraculous or natural. But however little weight is given to John's expression,  $\sigma\alpha\rho\xi\ \epsilon\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\circ$ , it will be found that it cannot denote a simple appearance, and that the idea of a birth, and more particularly of a miraculous birth, is implied in it. How, in short, was access to be obtained to human nature in all its reality, otherwise than by that organic and gradual development which finds its starting-point in birth? And how, on the other hand, could Jesus have become man in such a way as to represent entire humanity, if his human existence had had exactly the same origin as our own? It is to the paternal activity in birth that the really individualizing element belongs. The concurrence of a human father would have made Jesus just an individual superadded to all the others,—*a man*. Through the absence of this factor, and by the fact that He owed his human existence solely to the maternal factor, which represents human nature in itself, He was able to be not only a man, but the Son of Man, and to become the representative and organ of the entire race,—the central man, the second Adam. This unique position was that held by Jesus in John's view as well as in that of the Synoptics; it is one effect of this position that

all our Lord's acts have not only an individual value, but possess a bearing wide as humanity. Whatever He does, it is humanity which does it in Him. Now this characteristic of the life of Jesus, so forcibly expressed by the formula  $\sigma\alpha\rho\xi$ —not  $\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\sigma$  (a man)— $\epsilon_{\gamma}\epsilon:\epsilon\tau\sigma$ , implies and supposes the miraculous conception, recorded by the Synoptics, as its necessary condition.

3. In attempting, lastly, to reply to those who regard the pre-existence as irreconcilable with the real humanity of the Saviour, we are perfectly aware that we have to deal with the most difficult problem in theology. The views held by the two forms of Protestant theology, the Reformed and the Lutheran, are, in our judgment, incapable of solving the problem which the ancient orthodoxy, rather than Scripture, had bequeathed to them. For we confess that, on this point, the Church does not appear to us to have quite apprehended the thought of Scripture; and it will be our endeavour in the following paragraphs to shew, not the harmony of the orthodox doctrine of the two natures co-existent in Jesus Christ with Scripture, but rather the accord of Scripture with itself.

Does Scripture, in teaching the eternal existence of the Word, teach at the same time the presence of the Divine nature, that is to say, of its condition and attributes in Jesus Christ during the course of his earthly life? I do not think that the formula, John i. 14, is compatible with this idea. The expression, "*The Word was made flesh,*" speaks, indeed, of a Divine subject reduced to a human condition; but not of two conditions, Divine and human, being

co-existent. This notion is as contrary to exegesis as to logic. St. Paul expresses himself in exactly the same sense as St. John. According to Phil. ii. 6, 7, Christ, who was in the form of God, humbled (*ἐκένωσεν*,—literally, *emptied*) Himself by taking the form of a servant, and making Himself man ; which can only signify one thing, that He laid aside his Divine condition in order to assume the human ; He did not therefore combine them when He became incarnate, but He exchanged one for the other. In another passage (2 Cor. viii. 9) St. Paul declares that Christ, although He was rich, became poor, in order that we might be made rich through his poverty. This impoverishment can be nothing else than his renunciation of the Divine condition, a humiliation by which He identifies Himself with us, in order that He may subsequently raise us with Himself to the height of his original condition, even his Divine glory. The facts of the Gospel history are in harmony with these Apostolic declarations. Jesus on earth no longer possesses the attributes which constitute the Divine condition. He is not omniscient; for He asks questions, and we must allow that He does so sincerely, unless we would transform his life into a mere farce : “*Where have ye laid him?*” “*Who touched me?*” He says : “*No one knoweth, not even the Son.*” Omniscience does not admit of being divided as knowledge does ; one either has it, or has not it. Now Jesus positively declares in the last of these passages that He has not it at the time He is speaking. When, therefore, He gives proof of possessing supernatural knowledge, as when He meets with Nathaniel or with the Samaritan woman, it is a

higher knowledge no doubt; but it is not, it cannot be, omniscience. Neither does He possess omnipotence. It is not He who does the miracles; it is his Father who does them for Him at his request: "*Father, I know that thou hearest me always.*" And for this reason He can speak of them as testimonies which his Father bears to Him (John v. 36): "*The works which my Father giveth me to accomplish, the same bear witness of me.*" He is destitute of omnipresence. For He conveys Himself with his disciples from one place to another, and the energy which He sometimes exerts at a distance is still not omnipresence. The lives of the prophets present many incidents of this kind. His love even, perfect though it be, is nevertheless not Divine love. This is unchangeable, and can neither grow in extent or force. But who will maintain that Jesus in his cradle loved as at the age of twelve, or when He was twelve years old as on the cross? Perfect, relatively to each given moment, his love increased day by day, both in the energy of its spontaneous self-devotion and in the expansiveness of its embrace. It was therefore a truly human love. "*The grace of one man, Jesus Christ,*" says St. Paul (Rom. v. 15). "*For them I sanctify myself,*" says Jesus (John xvii. 19), "*in order that they also may be sanctified in truth.*" Although the purely human nature of this sanctification would not follow from the phrase, "*I sanctify myself,*" it is a necessary inference from the parallelism of these two expressions: "*I sanctify myself,*" and "*That they also may be sanctified.*" If the sanctification were not of the same nature in both cases, these words would have no

meaning. “*And he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one,*” says the Epistle to the Hebrews (ii. 11); “*wherefore he is not ashamed to call them his brethren.*” And Hebrews v. 8, “*Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect,*” &c. The holiness of Jesus is so far a human holiness that it is perfected at the cost of conflict, through the renunciation of legitimate enjoyment, and by a victory over the natural dread of pain. Had it been otherwise, there would have been no real temptation in his life. From all these facts we conclude that Jesus did not possess on earth those attributes which constitute the Divine condition; and hence we have no difficulty in comprehending the prayer with which He terminates his earthly career, wherein He asks for the glory which He had before his incarnation (John xvii. 5). This glory is the Divine condition with all its attributes; his *form of God*, according to the expression of St. Paul, which He laid aside when He became man.

But let us not lose sight of the other side of this truth. We cannot go so far as to say with Keim<sup>1</sup> that all the goodness contained in Christ's inner consciousness was the result of the moral conflicts of his life. There is, as Weizsäcker very properly observes, something in the consciousness of Christ which is not the result of his development, and which is expressed by the name *Son*. When Jesus says, John v. 20, “*The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth,*” the meaning of these words is not that Jesus feels Himself Son

<sup>1</sup> “Die menschliche Entwicklung Jesu,” 1861.

because his Father shews Him all things, but that the Father shews Him all because He is Son.<sup>1</sup> We have found in the Synoptics, as well as in St. John, the proof that the foundation of the life of Jesus was the consciousness of an unique exclusive relation to God anterior to his earthly existence. This is a psychological indication either of insanity or of the real presence in Christ of a *Divine subject*. But how are these contradictory data to be harmonized? How are we to conceive of a Divine subject being born into, and developing itself within, a truly human condition?

F. GODET.

THE FIRST CHAPTER OF  
THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

VERSES 8 AND 9.

JUST as there are planes of being on which the infinitely great and the infinitely little meet, so there are planes of relationship on which Jesus and God's angels touch one another and are kin. Do the angels minister to the Great Monarch of the universe? So does Jesus. Are they swift, ardent, devoted, and untiring in his service? So is Jesus. Do they fulfil behests for the benefit of men? So emphatically did Jesus. So does He still. He came to our earth, "not to be ministered unto, but to minister," even to the extent of "giving his life a ransom for multitudes." And now, when He is within the veil, he is ministrant still. He "ever liveth" to act as our great High Priest, making intercession for such as "come unto God by him."

<sup>1</sup> "Jahrb. für deutsche Theol.", t. vii. p. 656.

But while there are thus points of obvious contact between Jesus and angels, there are points of obvious contrast as well. There are ministries *and* ministeries. There is scope in ministry, as for the infinitely great, in its appropriate sphere, so for the infinitely little, and for all the grades that rank between. And hence a distinctive difference between Jesus and angels. Of the angels it is said in Scripture,—

*Who maketh his angels winds,  
And his ministers a flame of fire.*

They have received honourable employment, at the hand of the Universal Monarch, in some of the subordinate affairs of his government; and they heartily “do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.” But of the Son, as we read in verses 8 and 9 of the Chapter before us, it is said in a different kind of strain,—

*‘Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever :’  
and*

*‘The sceptre of equity is thy kingdom’s sceptre ;  
Thou lovedst righteousness, and hatedst lawlessness ;  
Therefore, O God, thy God anointed thee  
With oil of gladness above thy fellows.’*

It is thus higher things—“glorious things”—things allied to the infinitely great—that are spoken of the Son. According to his Father’s good pleasure, and in consequence of his own incomparable merit, his ministerial and mediatorial rank is transcendent and peerless.

The inspired writer introduces his disparted quotation by means of the expression, *but unto the Son*

*he saith;* or, *unto the Son on the other hand it is said* In the words of the citation, the Son is actually addressed, though not directly, by the Father. And hence the propriety of the English preposition *unto*, as well as of the Greek *πρός*; although, for lucidity's sake, it is legitimate, when translating the entire sentence into English, to avail oneself of the two-fold rendering *of* and *unto*, in the two contrastive clauses. So much more elastic is the Greek preposition than the English.

The passage cited is taken from the sixth and seventh verses of the forty-fifth Psalm,—one of those strangely fascinating odes of the Old Testament, which have an ineffaceable charm alike for the simple-hearted and unlettered child of faith and for the most scholarly and critical *littérateur*. It is a gem of a lyric, of the purest water. It is beautiful in diction, elevated in conception, bold in imagery, and singularly splendid in representation.

It has however become, more particularly in modern times, a battle-field of critics.

The Fathers of the Church,—led off by Justin Martyr among the Greeks, and Tertullian among the Latins—recognized, as it were unanimously, a Messianic element in the Psalm. It is the Messiah, according to them, who is the King, “fairer than the children of men, on whose lips grace is poured.” It is the Messiah, as the greatest of heroes and the unconquerable champion of right in its contest with might, whom the hymnist apostrophises thus :

3. *Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O Hero !  
Thy glory, and thy majesty :*

4. *Yea thy majesty !  
Go forth ;  
Drive on in thy chariot ;  
For the sake of truth, and the lowliness of  
righteousness :  
And thy right hand shall shew thee terrible  
things.*
5. *Thy sharp arrows—  
As the peoples fall under thee—  
Are in the heart of the enemies of the King !*

It is the Messiah, consequently, who is addressed in the immediately succeeding stanzas, which contain the words of the Letter - writer's quotation. And then, when in the second part of the Psalm there is mention made of the Queen, the Bride, "all glorious" in her person and array, standing "within" in "gold of Ophir," the virgins — her bridal companions—accompanying her ; and when, in addition, reference is made to other "kings' daughters," who were among the King's living treasures and "honourable women," the representations, though to us Europeans embarrassing with the riches and luxury of their imagery, were regarded by the Fathers as a brightly-coloured oriental vision of the Saviour's love to his people, considered partly in their unity, as the one Church of the living God, and partly in the plurality of the various communities or communions into which the one Church is territorially subdivided.

The Fathers of the Church were in this, the Messianic interpretation of the Psalm, in full accord with the Fathers of the Synagogue. The Chaldee Targumist paraphrases the second verse thus :—" *Thy*

beauty, *O King Messiah, is superior to that of the children of men: the spirit of prophecy has been imparted to thy lips: wherefore Jehovah has blessed thee for ever.*" Kimchi follows in the wake of the Targumist, unhesitatingly. So did Aben-Ezra, when his words are correctly interpreted (see Schöttgen's *Messias*, p. 432). And not they alone, by any means. "Innumerable others of more recent date," as Calmet expresses it, "interpret the Psalm of the Messiah."

Still greater numbers of Christian expositors, from the mediæval ages down, have recognized a Messianic element and aim in the Psalm;<sup>1</sup> the great majority supposing that the second or bridal section is throughout parabolic or allegorical, while a minority conceive that it is historical and typical.

Of the former class we have a conspicuous example and representative in F. Adolph Lampe, whose massive Monograph on the Psalm—characterized alike by remarkable learning, ingenuity, and elaboration—has achieved for it what Vitringa's great Commentary achieved for Isaiah. With him agree Cajetan, Amyraut, Geier, Owen, Döderlein (1779), Hengstenberg, Tholuck.

Of the latter class, Calvin, Grotius, Limborch, Bleek, are prominent representatives. Calvin says—in the fine old English version of Arthur Golding—"Like as it is certain that this Psalm was made upon Solomon, so is it uncertain who is the author of it. It seemeth likely unto me that some one of the

<sup>1</sup> "Es ist fast ein Unisono der besten Exegeten aller Jahrhunderte für die Messianität vorhanden."—Böhl, *Zwölf Messianische Psalmen*, p. 267.

prophets or godly teachers—whether it was after Solomon's death or while he was yet alive—took this ground to entreat of, to teach folk, that whatsoever had been seen in Solomon had a deeper respect." "Therefore, although the prophet began his treatise upon the son of David, yet he mounted up higher in spirit, and comprehended the kingdom of the true and everlasting Messias." Grotius says : "This poem was sung by virgins in honour of Solomon as a bridegroom, and of his bride, the daughter of the King of Egypt." "But even the Chaldee paraphrast acknowledges that it refers mystically to the Messiah." Limborch says : "This Psalm was composed in honour of Solomon when he married the daughter either of the King of Egypt or of the King of Tyre. Whence it is evident that the contents of the Psalm, in their first and literal sense, refer to Solomon ; but they are so august and glorious that we are shut up to the conclusion that a greater than Solomon is here."

There is a large third class of expositors, preponderant in these modern times, at once from their numbers and their scholarship, who object entirely to the Messianic interpretation. They maintain that there is not the least evidence, in the ode itself, that the author had any other object in view than the eulogistic celebration of the nuptials of his sovereign. Krahmer regards the application of the bridal section to the Messiah as not only arbitrary, unnatural, and strained, but as positively "scandalous." It is admitted, however, that sooner or later, after the ode had got into circulation among the pious, it so insinuated itself into their mystical

longings and aspirations, that at length there grew upon it, and as it were into it, a Messianic interpretation, just as if such a conception had been a part of the poet's original intention.

How, then, shall we regard the Psalm?

We cannot, in the first place, accept the theory—assumed by the Fathers, advocated by Lampe, espoused by Cajetan, Amyraut, Geier, Owen, endorsed by Kohlbrügge in his Monograph, and lately defended with great ability by Reinke in his *Messianische Psalmen*—that the reference is entirely unhistorical and mystical. The bridal section of the Psalm is throughout too realistic to be accounted for, without violent straining, on such a hypothesis. In particular, there is difficulty in relation to the polygamous element. And even were that difficulty to yield, there is further difficulty in distinguishing between the individuality of the mystical queen and the distinct individuality of each of the other royal daughters who are among the bridegroom's 'honourable' or 'beloved' women. And there is, besides, yet another difficulty in relation to the declaration, "*instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.*" It seems so natural to interpret such a good wish as a veiled realistic expression, appropriate to a bridal occasion. It is difficult, therefore, to accept the hypothesis of an entirely unhistorical Messianic reference.

But it seems to be still more difficult to accede to the hypothesis of Sykes, Knapp, De Wette, Krahmer, Ewald, Hupfeld, Maier, that the Psalm is non-Messianic altogether, at least in original intention,

and was merely a secular and eulogistic *epithalamium*, or *wedding-song* (Ewald), uttered from the ordinary plane of loyal congratulation. The following are among the indications that something higher is aimed at.

(1) There are significant references to the infinite in time :—“Therefore God hath blessed thee *for ever* ;” “Therefore shall peoples praise thee *for ever and ever*,” &c.

(2) A dominion of world-wide extent is assumed: “Thou shalt make thy children princes *in all the earth*.” If the translation be correct, a Messianic reference seems to be unquestionable; and that it is correct seems, at least, to be highly probable, and is admitted by De Wette. Consider the expression in the succeeding verse, “Therefore shall *peoples* praise thee.” The other rendering, *in all the land*, adopted by Knapp, Krahmer, Ewald, Hupfeld, dwarfs the gratulation into comparative insignificance, while the adjective *all* puffs out the insignificance into prominence.

(3) Then, when the poet addresses the king with profound reverence, and says, “Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, *O mighty One!*” (ver. 3) and again, “Thy throne, *O God*, is for ever and ever” (ver. 6), the language, though capable of application to other potentates than the Supreme, in consequence of the generic import of the words rendered *mighty One* and *God* (see EXPOSITOR, vol. i. pp. 361–365), is yet peculiarly appropriate to the King of kings. And the likelihood is that Isaiah alluded to it, and drew from it, when, in his indubitable Messianic oracle contained in Chapter ix. 2–7, he introduced as in-

tegrant items in the complex name of the Royal Child that was to be born, these two, *God, the mighty One.*

(4) We know that the Saviour alluded to Himself as a Bridegroom (Matt. ix. 15; xxii. 2; xxv. 1), and was alluded to by John the Baptist under the same representation (John iii. 29). And we know besides that St. Paul speaks of the ‘mystery’ of the relation “between Christ and the Church” as shadowed forth in the relation that unites husband and wife (Eph. v. 22–33); and that St. John in like manner speaks of “the marriage-supper of the Lamb,” and of the bride “who makes herself ready” in her “fine linen, clean and white” (Rev. xix. 7–9). It is not a creepingly prosaic, but a soaringly poetic representation, that must no doubt have been originally a glowing picture, painted in a moment of rapture, within some poet’s ‘chamber of imagery.’ Only thence could it have descended, as ‘a thing of beauty’ and ‘a joy for ever,’ into current use on the plane of common life, so as to become a household ideal. *The likelihood is, that the original picture is found in this forty-fifth Psalm, which, as a work of surpassing poetic genius, spoke at once and for ever to the hearts of the people.* It is likewise probable that the parallel representation of the gracious relation of Jehovah to Israel, under the Old Testament economy, was, so far at least as its developed form is concerned, derived by the prophets, greater and smaller, from the same source. And thus, if some of the boldest and most fascinating Messianic representations, that occur both in the Old Testament Scriptures and in the New, flow from the fountain

of our Psalm, it is surely not improbable, to say the least of it, that its bridal scene should have in it, intentionally and indelibly, something of the spiritual and the Messianic.

(5) Then again, the Psalm was addressed, if not by the author himself, yet at all events by the collector, to *the Music-Master*, doubtless for the very purpose of being introduced into the service of song within the sanctuary (see Stähelin, *Zur Einleitung in die Psalmen*, § 1). But such a destination of the Psalm would be utterly incredible, if it were merely *a secular epithalamium*.

(6) And, indeed, the very fact that it has a place in the Psalter affords presumptive evidence that it is, and was intended to be, of sacred import. The five books of the Psalter are not mere bundles and jumbles of all sorts of ballads and poems—a Hebrew *olla podrida*. They were selected by the different editorial collectors with the view of furnishing for the people, as it were *a hymn-book*, or miscellany of sacred song for adoration, edification, and praise.

What then? Shall we fall back on the theory of an intentional ‘double reference’? Shall we suppose that the poet had in his eye both a typical and anti-typical bridal? and that he so modulated his music, that melody rose beyond melody, all along the terraces of his song, till the several strains and grades combined in one sublime symphony? Or shall we, on the other hand, suppose that while, so far as his own consciousness was concerned, the poet intended only to speak of things seen, temporal, and historical, his words were secretly so

overruled by the Spirit, that breathed upon him from above, that they were made capable, in the Divine intention, of a complementary reference to things unseen and ideal?

To either of these theories there are formidable objections.

(1) To the former :—For if we shall assume that the entire details of representation were intended to be applicable,—though on different planes, and in different degrees of adaptability,—to the personages and events of two distinct scenes, one present and the other future, then the question arises,—What ground in reason is there, *intrinsic to the Psalm itself*, to vindicate such duality of reference? But if it shall be assumed that the dual reference, instead of comprehending and covering all the details, is merely occasional and partial, then how is the devotional reader, or even the literary critic, to disintegrate the typical from the antitypical? Is not the Psalm turned into an enigma?

(2) There are likewise serious objections to the second theory; for it seems, in its very essence, to remove the antitypical element from the sphere of human observation. If the Psalmist had no thought of it, while he wrote, on what principle are we to have thought of it, while we read?

There must surely be some *via media*, though it should be but as an indeterminate bridle-path, between these two theories.—How may we find it?

We are not likely ever to find it, unless we are on our guard against transferring our highly developed and largely ramified distinctions in logical thought

to products of a more indefinite and rudimentary era in literature. There is but little reason for supposing that the inspired Psalmists wrought out for themselves, or got wrought out in them, or for them, any elaborated scheme of Messianic typology. Not unlikely they never expressly formulated to themselves the ideas of *type* and *foreshadow*, as distinguished from *prophecy*, *anticipation*, *expectation*, *hope*, *history*. Their very idea of *prophecy* differed from that which is current in these modern times, and was far more generic. Their idea of *history* too was different. Indeed, they had no word for *history proper*, in our modern acceptation of the term. They did not distinguish it from *a practical miscellany of moral biographical sketches*. And since they did not, it is cruel injustice to subject the ancient biblical narratives and representations to criticisms that derive all their apparent validity from a state and stage of literature belonging to a totally different epoch of development.

It should never be forgotten that there is a ceaseless growth in human language, so long as it lives, and that one of the difficulties which the honest investigator has to encounter, in his effort to reproduce the conceptions of past ages, arises from the fact that the terms in which thought is carried, and carried on, represent at different stages, and in different ages,—so far as the inseparable subjective element is concerned,—variable quantities and qualities.

There is growth in thought too. Even after minds reach the stage when, so far as mere power is concerned, an absolute maximum has been

attained, there are still other dimensions, distinct from that of power, which are elastic, and within which growth goes on. Collective mind grows. National mind grows. Mind, ecumenically, grows. The human mind of Jesus grew (Luke ii. 40, 52). It would not have been human if it had leaped at a bound into the maturity and fulness of manhood. The minds consequently of all the inspired writers grew,—even after the crisis of their inspiration, and under it, and indeed very specially in consequence of it. They could not see everything in a minimum of time. They could not understand everything at a glance. We shall never comprehend a hundred niceties and peculiarities in the epistles of St. Paul, if we leave out of view the element of growth, consequent on his conversion and inspiration,—an element that interpenetrated the whole period of his literary activity. In St. Peter too there was the same growth and progression. Even after his ultimate commission as an apostle, he found room, or at all events room was in him, for growth in manifold ways, theologically as well as otherwise. Consider, for instance, his view of the relation of the gospel to the Gentiles, before and after his vision in Joppa and his visit to Cornelius.

Is it to be wondered at that this principle of growth should require to be applied to prophets and psalmists, individually, and in the mass? and indeed to prophecy and psalms in general? What if we should come to the conclusion, that at the time when the forty-fifth Psalm was written, there was but a rudimentary conception of the Bridegroom-relation-ship of the Messiah? What if ample scope and

verge remained for the future growth and development of the conception? What if the actual nuptials of an actual historical king afforded the first occasion for the beautiful idea? Must not the King of kings have a fitting Object for the full enjoyment, and the full reciprocation, of his love?

The entire Old Testament, like the New, is a growth. During the currency of the Dispensations through which it extended, there was progression from stage to stage. The close of the Old Testament Book is far in advance of the commencement. Isaiah saw farther and more clearly, in things Messianic, than Moses. Not because he had a more commanding intellect or a more penetrative eye; these he had not: but because it was inevitable that, after the journeyings of the children of Israel, and their successive advances, for many re-repetitions of forty years, he could get, and he got, to the summit of a higher Pisgah than it was possible for Moses to climb. Still earlier patriarchs than Moses, such as Noah and Enoch, would have still more primitive and indeterminate conceptions. To them legislation and administration were not disintegrated. Not even were kinghood, priesthood, and prophethood disintegrated. And thus they had not the materials for comprehending the work of the Messiah under the manifold phases and forms of thought that became familiar to later thinkers and seers.

A far higher stage was reached in the Psalm-epoch of the Hebrew people. Still there must have been, even then, comparative dimness of vision and immaturity of conception. It was yet but the early spring, not the full-blown summer. It was the

dusky ‘gloaming’ time, not the sparkling day-spring, nor the noonday brightness, nor the deep mellow radiance of the evening.

The writer, then, of the forty-fifth Psalm must not be lifted out of his own age and stage, and set down in ours. He did not see with our eyes, or from our standpoints. Even when we step back nearly two millenniums, we do not find his familiar points of view. He did not, and he could not, occupy those intellectual pinnacles on which stood Peter, Paul, Apollos, John. Some things he saw as clearly as ever apostles did. His vision certainly was as vigorous. The imagery amid which it revelled was as splendid as theirs, or more so. He was a poet of the highest order, though searing in an atmosphere still loaded and darkened with intransparent vapours. What wonder, therefore, if he did not see clearly that a greater than any of the earlier or later Davidic kings was needed to realize the Divine promises, establish the Divine reign, and extend the sweets of Divine peace over the whole distracted world? What wonder that it was only the ‘primer’ lesson of the great bridal ‘mystery’ that he was able to spell?

He was emphatically a child of faith. He might, as such, have appropriately obtained a niche in the eleventh Chapter of this Epistle. His name, though unrecorded, was really, and is really, on the divinely illumined roll. His faith, too, was the “substance,” or the substrate,—the ‘standing-under’ and the ‘understanding,’—of “things hoped for,”—“the evidence of things not seen.” But it was at best, as was no doubt even St. Paul’s in an after age, partial, incom-

plete, indeterminate, though sufficient. His eye was searching for the longed - for Object, and caught glimpses of the grand Reality; yet it saw only "dimly," and as in a still more meagre and less glassy mirror, than that of which the greatest and clearest of the apostles complained.

While we cannot doubt that the great poet was gazing on an actual royal bridegroom, starry with the highest endowments of manly grace, beauty, and power; and was also looking with ravished eye upon, or toward, the splendour of an actual royal bride; yet we can as little doubt that when his spirit, in his ecstasy, poured forth his sublime gratulations, it was reading between the lines of his own utterances, and contemplating the ideal in the real, the spiritual in the material, the invisible in the visible, the future in the present, the Divine in the human.

The poet was in fact contemplating—in his own peculiar way—Him who was the Hope of Israel, the true Hero of mankind, the impersonated Sum and Substance of those promises which had animated the hearts of the patriarchs, and to which, as their only refuge from social despair, their believing descendants were tenaciously clinging. The eye of the body was beholding an actual Israelitish monarch,—most probably, as Calvin contends, and as Böhl admits, Solomon in all his glory,—while the eye of his spirit was beholding the absolutely peerless One, the King of kings. There was thus the phenomenon of 'double vision.' There was 'second sight,' the privilege and peculiarity of the spiritual seer.

Had the rapt seer descended from his pinnacle of ecstasy, to the level of a mere prosaic spectator and well-wisher, he might have contented himself with saying, in appropriately eloquent terms,—*What a noble man this monarch is! How graceful! How gracious! How princely! How grand!* *Is there not something divine in him?* *God grant that his reign may inaugurate, for the whole world, the golden age of goodness and glory.* *Blessed may he be in the Queen, his Bride!* *Blessed may she be in him!* *May there now be universal peace, universal prosperity, universal righteousness, universal love.*

But it is not with prosaic longings and good wishes, any more than it is with mere theological dogmatic typology, that we have here to do. Psalm xlv. flashes aloft and athwart, like a meteor. And as it passes, it projects across the path, and into the future, of the magnificent Israelitish potentate, the grand ideal of the seer.

The prophets, we are informed (1 Pet. i. 11), had often to “search diligently” in reference to the time and “the manner of time,” when their predictions would be fulfilled. They had likewise, we may rest assured, to search at times, with equal diligence, in reference to the persons, and the manner of persons, in whom their prophecies, and the promises that were from of old, would find their highest verification. So might it be with our psalmist. So, we doubt not, it was.

As to the bridal element in the poem, we, in this age of the world, and in the midst of the light of this advanced stage of biblical revelation, should

have no difficulty in separating accidents of form from substance of essence. We have only to allow to a true seed-thought the air and light and heat which are the conditions of its vital growth. Let it grow. Let us watch its growth. Let us pass along from spring-time to summer, from summer to autumn. See how the seed is distending. When we come again by-and-by, we find that it has distended farther still. It has burst some of the fibres of the husk that enveloped it, and these fibres shrivel. Yet no injury is done to the seed. Nor is the seed-thought supplanted by an absolutely 'new creation.' Look again. Only the sere wrappings have 'waxed old' and are ready to 'vanish away.' The thought itself lives, thrives, grows, blooms, and ripens, till it is grander, in its 'palingenesy,' than even Solomon in all his glory, or his queen in gold of Ophir.

We turn now to the disparted quotation which the Letter-writer makes from this remarkable Messianic Psalm.

*While of the angels it is said,—*

*Who maketh his angels winds,  
And his ministers a flame of fire,*

*to the Son it is said,—*

*Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.*

It is not simply the phrase *O God*, on which the writer hangs the weight of his illustrative reasoning. Angels too might be called *gods*. And even men in the position of potentates or High Powers might be so designated. The word did not start from its highest application, and come down. It ascended

from below by gradual steps, until at length it took wing and alighted on the Infinite One. Then it settled there, as having reached its natural consummation,—leaving traces, however, here and there, of its gradual ascent, and consequently of its earlier and inferior applications. It is fully as much in consequence of the accompaniments of the august appellation, as in virtue of the appellation itself, that the citation verifies itself as thoroughly apposite to the writer's purpose. The Divine Son has a *throne*. He is *a King*, not a mere *messenger* or *minister*. And his throne is *for ever and ever*. Unlike the thrones of other monarchs, it will never be vacated. His reign is to last 'while the sun and moon endure.' The King's kinghood, like his kingdom, is to run on into eternity.

Such is the first part of the disparted citation. The second is ushered in by the copulative *and*, which has no place either in the original Hebrew or in the Septuagint Version. Nor is it found in our English Authorized Version, for it is wanting in the 'Received Text' and the Vulgate, as in both the Syriac Versions. It must, therefore, have been wanting in very early manuscripts. Yet it is found in SABD\*E\*M, 17; and as it is hard to believe that it could have been intruded wilfully by transcribers, it must no doubt have stood in the texts from which they copied, and is likely therefore to be genuine. It had apparently been employed by the Letter-writer to make two citations instead of one. The passage really contains a double illustrative proof of his important theological position.

*The sceptre of equity is thy kingdom's sceptre.* Such is the reading that is approved of by both Tischendorf and Tregelles, as also by Lachmann in his minor edition. It has the support of the manuscripts SABM, 17; and is all the more likely to be genuine, that it is at variance with the reading of the Septuagint. Transcribers might deliberately, and with very innocent intention, change the reading of a New Testament citation, to bring it into absolute harmony with its Old Testament original. But it is not probable that they would wilfully vary the citation from the ancient text, especially when the variation involves a rather unusual phase of presentation. That is the case in the expression before us. It is really—so far as substance of thought is concerned—indifferent whether we say, *The sceptre of thy kingdom is a sceptre of righteousness*; or, *The sceptre of righteousness is thy kingdom's sceptre*. But the latter form of presentation is comparatively rare. The subject and predicate of the proposition *are supposed to be 'logically' convertible*.

But the two phraseological possibilities for expressing the interchangeable relationship afford two distinct handles for laying hold of the thought. The thought, as exhibited in the adopted reading, is, that the character of the royal rule of the Messiah is ascertained, when we learn what a perfect royal rule really is. If the sceptre of an ideally perfect king be the sceptre of absolute equity, then just that very sceptre is the Messiah's.

*Thou lovedst righteousness and hatedst lawlessness, or iniquity.* The former word (*ἀνομίαν*) is the read-

ing of BDEKLM, the latter (*ἀδικιαν*) of SA. The tenses of the verbs are noticeable, *lovedst*, *hatedst*; not, *hast loved*, and *hast hated*. The sum total of the past part of the royal rule is broken off in thought, and separated from the present, as being amply sufficient to afford a basis for reward on the part of the Divine Father. The bard is wishing to account for the peculiar bliss that had at length come down upon his Hero. He finds the reason in the Father's approbation of the incorruptible integrity and equity with which the Son has wielded his delegated sceptre.

*Therefore, O God!* So doubtless should we translate,—re-introducing the vocative of the preceding verse. Symmetry demands it. And quite a preponderance of the best translators and expositors, both ancient and modern, either contend for it or acquiesce in it. Ehrenfried Pfeiffer, in his Monograph on Heb. i. 8, 9, decides for it. And so does even Paulus. Abresch too, and Valkenaer, and Böhme. So also Klee, Ebrard, Reinke, Lüemann, Böhl, Bisping, Kurtz, Riehm. A peculiar idea is entertained by Bleek, de Wette, Maier, that the expression is vocative in the Septuagint Version and the Epistle to the Hebrews, but not in the Hebrew original. It is an idea resting on mere conjecture, intrinsically unlikely.

*Thy God anointed thee.* We have seen that the word *God*—especially in Hebrew—is not always absolute. It is not so even here, though here it rises to the pinnacle of its applicability. The Father is our God, and the Messiah's too (John xx. 17),

just as He is our Father, and the Messiah's too (John xx. 17). In another aspect, equally true, the Messiah's sonship is transcendent and supreme; and so is his divinity, which is in truth identical with that of the Father.

*Anointed thee,—with an unction of gratulation,—an unction manifesting honour on the one hand, and conveying gratification on the other.* Compare, but as from afar, our Lord's unction by Mary (Matt. xxvi. 7, &c.).

*With oil of gladness beyond thy fellows.* The joy showered upon the Messiah, as King of kings, is far beyond the joys of which other monarchs are susceptible. The dignity is inestimably greater. The Divine favour is inestimably greater. The Divine complacency is correspondingly greater. And hence the sweetness and fragrance of his gladness is inconceivably greater.

The entire citation is singularly apt as illustrative evidence that the Messiah's position in the moral universe is very different from that occupied by angels, and much more exalted. While they are the messengers of royalty, the Messiah is Himself royal in the highest degree. His sceptre is absolutely immaculate. His throne is for perpetuity. His bliss and joy—the reflection of the Father's complacency—are as far above the bliss and joy of other potentates, as heaven is higher than the earth.

J. MORISON.

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*THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.*

## CHAPTER II. VERSES 9-15.

AFTER enjoining on Timothy prayer for all men, because God loves all men, the Apostle appears to make, in verse 9, a strange transition to commonplace and small detail. A glance at the condition of the Ephesian Church will shew, however, that it may have been a matter of transcendent importance. There are many indications in Paul's Epistles that the emancipation of woman, effected to some extent by his own teaching, had borne some bitter fruit. In Philippi certain ladies had taken a prominent and alarming position. They had, moreover, been unable to agree in the views and practices of the Church, and were threatening it with disruption. Paul's doctrine that in Christ Jesus there was neither male nor female, that both were one in Him (Gal. iii. 28), was not intended by the Apostle to obliterate the fundamental relations of the sexes; but it was abused into license and perverted into sin. From the seclusion of the Eastern Haram, from the concealment practised in the Jewish synagogue, the Christian woman had felt herself called to public appearance and self-manifestation. The attractions of the female voice and prophetic song, which combined the mystery of the priestess of Apollo and Artemis with the familiarity of Christian communion, in a city where theatres, gymnasia, and temples abounded, where the *Hetairæ* were a recognized and respectable class in society, might have occasioned boundless possibilities of evil. It seems fair to infer that, unwarned by the example

of Corinth, the Ephesian ladies came in dazzling attire, and with some display of their personal charms, into the Christian society, making a sensation, if not creating a scandal; if so, it becomes perfectly easy to conceive that Paul could hardly think of the prayer and praise of the Christian assembly without uttering some words of wise and necessary admonition.

*In like manner (I desire, understood or carried forward from the previous sentence) that the women adorn themselves* (in every place of worship and prayer especially) *in appropriate apparel, with inward modesty and self-control.* Archbishop Trench distinguishes *αἰδὼς* from *αἰσχύνη*, shewing that the former word, here used and translated “modesty,” from its etymology, represents a disposition which turns away with inward loathing from that which is evil, as that which cannot be even looked upon or thought about. The great word *σωφροσύνη*, according to Plato, is “the strength of the soul,” the sound-mindedness which exercises supreme control over passion and pleasure.<sup>1</sup> These characteristics are a rich adornment; they imply a deep sense of what is evil; no secret pleasure in that which is externally reprobated, but an inward disgust and a true self-mastery.

Paul even sets the Christian ladies of Ephesus a lesson in matters in which they probably thought that he had no right to interfere. He condemned

<sup>1</sup> Xenophon does not give such force to the former word as to the latter. “The modest” are those who avoid the *appearance* of what is shameful; the “sound-minded” avoid it in its most secret and invisible haunts.

“plaitings [of hair], and gold and pearls and costly garments.” These peculiarities are condemned in nearly the same words by St. Peter (1 Epistle iii. 3); and, in all probability, the words point to a display in the Christian assembly which the Apostle thought inconsistent with the spirituality, the unworldliness, the sound-mindedness, the sanctity of the Church of God.

Luther, Calvin, Mack, Huther, connect the δι ἔργων ἀγαθῶν with the previous word ἐπαγγελομέναις, and would translate it thus: “but [let them adorn themselves in that] which is befitting women who profess godliness through [or by] good works.” This construction is awkward, while it is equally grammatical (with Ellicott and others) to connect “the good works” with the principal verb, and translate it as follows: “but [let them adorn themselves] with good works [a proceeding or habit] which besets those who are professing godliness. The beauty of holiness, the glory of goodness, the charms of purity, modesty, and self-control were in the Apostle’s mind when he said, “There is neither male nor female: ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Verse 11.—“*Let woman learn*, not taking upon her to teach, in the Church, even if her prophetic voice, all through the history of the kingdom of God, must be listened to. Let her learn *in silence* or *in tranquillity*; not that she is not to ask questions, at any time or in any place: but so far as the house of God is concerned, let her disposition to learn reveal itself in *every kind of subjection*. Her strength is in her submission. Her far-reaching sway over man is legitimately exercised by her receptivity; by her

yielding up her own will; not by her self-assertion and conspicuous activity. Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Woman's glory is her meekness; her authority is in her love. The might of self-sacrifice, of self-submission, of self-abnegation, of "every kind of subjection," reached its highest expression in Christ. Paul would have woman put forth the loftiest idea of the Divine life.

*Verse 12.*—Here is a practical development of the principle, which was at that moment in the history of the Church of vital importance: "*I do not permit woman to teach or exercise authority over men, but [I do<sup>1</sup> exhort them] to be in tranquillity or silence.*" The word here used for the "exercise of authority" is a very unusual word, and is only found in later Greek. It is used for one who exercises authority even with murderous intent, and implies considerable and special force in the manifestation of it. A vehement exertion of female influence in the Christian assembly, and public instruction for the Church by woman's voice, were resented and condemned by Paul. The Apostle was equally explicit on other occasions. If any section of the Church or society be eager to render legitimate a violation of the rule which has largely pervaded Christendom from Apostolic times, it is dishonest and idle to try and explain away the judgment of St. Paul with reference to what was fitting in the early Church.

In *verse 13* the Apostle goes back to Eden for a justification of his doctrine, and we have another proof, not that he was blinded by his Rabbinical

<sup>1</sup> Cf. for this construction Chap. iv. ver. 3.

education, but that he was, by deeply ingrained habit of thought, accustomed to regard the facts and principles of the Old Testament as symbolic and parabolic, and the source of perpetual instruction. The reason that he gave for the Christian bearing of the two sexes toward each other was the fundamental illustration of their mutual relations furnished by the most sacred and venerable fragment of the Old Testament. *For*, says the Apostle, *Adam was first fashioned, then Eve.* The word translated "fashioned" is that used in LXX. (Gen. ii. 7),<sup>1</sup> and implies pre-existing material, without excluding a long and even laborious process. Humanity was complete and centred in a personal unity before the separation of the sexes. The Apostle points thus not merely to priority in point of time, but to superiority in respect of immediate relation with God. Adam's function was to teach and to rule in virtue of that superiority. It is further added, *and Adam was not deceived*: i.e., his eyes were open to the magnitude of his sin; he was over-persuaded by conjugal love. He knew what he was doing, and hence his transgression was more blameworthy. But though there was a greater sin committed by Adam than by his wife, there was greater power; *but the typical woman* is branded with the condemnation of impulsive weakness, and *having been deceived* or seduced into actually believing a lie, and disbelieving the voice of the Lord, *has become the prey of and involved in the transgression.*<sup>2</sup> Having

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Rom. ix. 20; 2 Macc. vii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> The form of construction is not uncommon in the New Testament: Luke xxii. 44; Phil ii. 7.

exercised authority over the man, she fell under the curse of the greater sin of her lord. *Man*, the one head of the human family, fell in his entirety; for both his will and his rational and emotional nature disobeyed. Woman was the element of the persuasion to evil; the emotional and sensual element became too strong through her presentation and embodiment of it for the intellectual and regulative faculties, and she suffers a real and typical subordination. This may sound to our ears a far-fetched argument when used to discountenance female usurpation of intellectual supremacy. It was, however, a method current at the time to look for and find in the Scriptures the concrete expressions of almost all philosophical judgments. At the present day we could hardly find a more vivid illustration of the essential difference between the masculine and feminine nature. If there be this distinction between the sexes, that distinction still furnishes the basis of an argument and a reason for the advice here rendered. The catastrophe of Eden is the beacon for all generations when the sexes repeat the folly of Eve and Adam and exchange their distinctive position and functions. So also an echo of the Fall reverberates in every human heart when the passions rule the intellect and mind yields its sovereignty to the affections.

*Verse 15.—Nevertheless womankind shall be saved through the childbearing*, i.e., through the fulfilment of the promise made to her seed, which, while the curse fell upon her, wreathed an aureole of new and wondrous glory round her head. By this translation, the δὲ has its true adversative power, the

"article" before the word "childbearing," receives its appropriate force, and the preposition διὰ is not deprived of its genuine instrumental value. Ellicott here follows Hammond, and gives the true explanation, which is not even hinted at by the majority of German expositors. *Τεκνογονία* is not used elsewhere for the "incarnation," and the word was not adopted in this sense by the later writers. Chrysostom, *in loco*, gives to it the sense of maternal functions and duties; but this translation would leave the emphatic article unaccounted for. There was *one* "childbearing," one "giving of a son" to our race, which is the salvation of the world and which has reversed the curse of Eve's deception and Adam's fall. The concluding words of the verse shew the broad individualizing application of the great childbearing. *Each woman must abide in faith and love and sanctification, with holy self-control.* A grand description this of the true saint, of the perfect woman. It is not by the instrumentality of her maternal functions that she becomes perfect, but through the sublime fact to which those functions ever point; and also when, in any special case, faith, love, holiness, and self-mastery spring from heartfelt acquiescence in the glorious victory of God over the malice of the devil.

II. R. REYNOLDS.

*BRIEF NOTICES.*

*A Popular Commentary on the New Testament.* By D. D. WHEEDON, D.D. Vols. I.—III. (Hodder and Stoughton.)—This Commentary, which extends to the Epistle to the Romans, is not, as its very title declares, addressed to scholars, or even to students of the Word. It is intended for readers of little culture and ordinary intelligence. And to these it can hardly fail to be useful and acceptable: for it is carefully written, and the author is evidently conversant not only with the works of many previous Expositors, but also with those lively and picturesque books of travel, such as Dean Stanley's and Dr. Thomson's, which throw so much light on the inspired page. His comments are for the most part brief, compressed, and to the purpose. But, occasionally at least, they betray a lack of the critical faculty and a theological tone of thought strangely at variance with his text. Thus, for example, in commenting on St. Matt. v. 7, he quite unnecessarily, with no prompting or suggestion from the verse itself, takes occasion to distinguish “between a virtue and a piety,” and to affirm that “a virtue may exist in unregenerate nature,” and is only “*in a sense* approved by God.” Nor does he seem at all aware of the discordant note which he thus strikes, of the utter variance of his tone with the large, catholic, generous tone of the Sermon on the Mount. Yet to deprecate “*mere virtue*” and “*moral excellence*” is surely to betray a spirit at the farthest remove from that of Him who loved excellence wherever He found it, and found much to admire and love in the natural virtues of little children, and even of the “*sinners*” whom He drew to Himself.

*From Jerusalem to Antioch.* By J. OSWALD DYKES, M.A., D.D. (Hodder and Stoughton.)—All who have heard Dr. Dykes will expect to find in these Expository Lectures on Acts i.—xii. much and clear thought, based on competent knowledge of his theme, expressed in a style of rare, if somewhat laboured, finish and beauty, and informed by a devout and refined spirit. Nor will they be disappointed. All these excellent qualities are happily displayed in the volume before us.

# THE EXPOSITOR.

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*AN APOLOGY FOR THE VINDICTIVE PSALM.*

(PSALM CIX.)

I do not propose in the present paper to deal with any of the so-called "Vindictive" or "Imprecatory" Psalms, except *the Imprecatory Psalm par excellence*—the 109th. For a satisfactory explanation—or, perhaps I should say, for such explanation as has hitherto been offered—of the fierce, passionate, and apparently malevolent expressions contained in such Psalms as the 35th, 40th, 55th, 58th, 59th, 69th, 137th, and 140th, I must be content—for the present, at any rate—to refer my readers to the Commentaries, and especially to those of Calvin, Perowne, and Kay. I am now concerned only with one Psalm—the one which is, confessedly, by far the most difficult and painful of its class.

The explanation which I have to offer of this seemingly mysterious<sup>1</sup> and, certainly as it stands, most distressing and perplexing composition—a composition which even the most loyal and devout Christian cannot read without certain uncomfortable

<sup>1</sup> "Mysterious" was the one word written opposite this Psalm in the pocket Bible of a late devout and popular writer. It represents the utter perplexity with which it is very generally regarded.

misgivings; which some Christians, to the writer's certain knowledge, have expunged from the Bible of their private devotions, and which many Churchmen hear with compressed lips, and sometimes with ostentatious silence, when it is chanted in the church at evensong—the explanation of it here submitted, though new probably to most of our readers, is not new in itself. It was suggested to me in outline, some years ago, by a well-known Jewish Rabbi; and another Rabbi has since informed me that it is the received interpretation amongst his co-religionists. (I am bound to say, however, that, so far as my reading extends, I have not found it in any of the great Jewish Commentators, with the one exception of Mendelssohn.) As far as I can discover, it first appeared in this country in the pages of Dr. Sykes's exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is adopted by the learned Hebraists, Kennicott, Lowth, and J. D. Michaelis, and is noticed with approval by Dr. Adam Clarke. It was advanced in Italy just one hundred years ago, by Saverio Mattei, who confesses, however, to having derived it from an earlier writer. He says that, after consulting all the fathers and all the divines, both [Roman] Catholic and Protestant, the first who afforded him any satisfactory hint was Marco Marino. It appears to have suggested itself quite independently to the Rev. W. Keate, who advocated it, though with indifferent ability, in a sermon preached in 1794. It is noticed, but only to be summarily dismissed as untenable, by Dr. Durell ("Critical Remarks on the Psalms," &c.), and by the American writer Hibbard, and

with somewhat more respect by Merrick. With these exceptions, I do not remember to have seen it mentioned elsewhere. Most modern writers on the Psalms appear not even to have heard of it.<sup>1</sup> After revolving it in my mind, however, for a much longer period than that prescribed by the Latin poet to impatient authors, I am more than ever convinced that it is *a* legitimate, if not indeed the *only* legitimate, and consistent explanation. Nor am I without hopes of bringing the candid and unprejudiced reader to a similar conclusion.

The Psalm, then, to begin with, is—*pace* Ewald—one of David's. So we gather from the superscription (תְּהִלָּה?), and from one ancient version, the Syriac, which furthermore informs us that it was composed by him on the occasion of the revolt of Absalom. Some of the Rabbins, however,—Aben Ezra and Kimchi, for example,—believe it to have been directed, not against Absalom or Ahithophel, but against Doeg the Edomite, or possibly against Saul. It is immaterial to my present purpose which of these views the reader accepts, though I have strong reasons, as I shall hope to shew presently, for believing it to have been suggested by, or rather during, the rebellion of Absalom. It is also worth noting that the superscription, “to the Chief Musician,” to the Precentor (פְּרֶנְצֹן?), proves it to have been designed, such as it is, for the Tabernacle or Temple service of song.

<sup>1</sup> It is briefly referred to in the second edition of Dr. Perowne's valuable work. It is also advocated in the Rev. C. Taylor's “Gospel in the Law,”—a work which I had not the good fortune to see till long after this Paper was written. It is mentioned, *en passant*, in the “Speaker's Commentary.”

The next point to be observed is, that part of the 8th verse of the Psalm ("Let another take his office") is quoted loosely by St. Peter (Acts i. 20) along with the 25th verse of the 69th Psalm ("Let their habitation be desolate," &c.), and is by him cited as a prophecy or an illustration—which it remains to consider—of the fate of Judas Iscariot. I mention this here because it has been held by some to be conclusive against the interpretation I am about to advocate. What is the *true* value and significance of the quotation I shall examine by and by.

Now the usual explanation of the Psalm is, it is almost needless to say, that which is given in the digest or argument prefixed to it in our English Bibles, viz., that "David, complaining of his slanderous enemies, under the person of Judas, devoteth them." It is, in other words, that it was David who pronounced all these imprecations—there are some five-and-twenty of them; that he levelled them *primarily* against some personal enemy then living, and *prophetically* against Judas Iscariot. The learned disagree, indeed, as to the object of these curses; but they are all, with the few exceptions I have instanced above, of one opinion as to the author of them. They are unanimous in ascribing them to David. I shall hope to shew, however, that there are serious, if not indeed insuperable, objections to supposing that these rancorous execrations ever proceeded from him, and I shall try to establish that so far from their having been *heaped by him upon his enemies*, *they were really heaped by his enemies upon him*.

But before I endeavour to *prove* this from the internal structure, &c., of the Psalm, I venture to ask whether there is not an antecedent improbability that David—that magnanimous and generous prince, that man after God's own heart—should have uttered and recorded, and possibly adapted to music, such language, even with regard to his bitterest foes, as that which we find here?

I freely allow there are dark, very dark, passages in David's life; I am constrained to admit that in other Psalms he has used words, imprecations, which it is extremely difficult to justify; but nowhere else do we find anything comparable to this. There is here, unless I am much mistaken, a pitiless hate, a refined and insatiable malignity, which it is very difficult to reconcile with his character and conduct on other occasions. For it is not merely that the author of these curses (whoever he may have been) denounces some material disaster against the object of them (whoever he may have been)—as is done in the 11th verse (“Let the extortioner catch all that he hath, and let strangers spoil his labour”); it is not merely that speedy death is denounced against him (as in the 8th and 9th verses, “Let his days be few; . . . . let his children be fatherless”); it is not merely that temporal misery and ruin are imprecated upon this man's *children* (as in the 10th and 12th verses, “Let his children be continually vagabonds and beg; . . . . neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children”); it is not merely that for them too, as for him, swift destruction is prayed for (as in verse 13, “Let his posterity be cut off, and in the generation following let their

name be blotted out") : it is—and it is this which makes it so revolting—it is that *moral*, if not indeed *spiritual*, misfortune, the ruin of man in his relations to his God, is denounced against him. We see this in verse 7, "When he shall be judged let him be condemned, and *let his prayer become sin*;"<sup>1</sup> while, in verses 14, 15, a similar curse is actually directed against his *parents* and *progenitors*, "Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord, and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. Let them be before the Lord continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth." Now is it likely, I would ask, is it consistent with what we know of David's character, that such terrific curses—curses of which Mattei says that the *Thyestæ preces* are mild in comparison, and of which Mazzochi writes, "*quæ nec sine pilorum horrore legi possunt*"—curses designed to shut for ever God's door of mercy against the man and his race, were ever pronounced by David—David who, of all men, so much needed mercy himself? Compare with these relentless, these gluttonous, I had almost said these fiendish curses, his language and bearing on other occasions, and then say whether the man who spoke there can be the same man who speaks here. Can this be the generous hero who twice spared the life of the enemy who was seeking his life? Can this be the man who congratulated himself that he had been saved from avenging himself and shedding Nabal's blood? the man who, when Shimei cursed,

<sup>1</sup> Fallor, si majus aliquod maledictum jactari possit in hominem, quam ut taliter fiant ejus vota et sacrificia et orationes ut nequeat distingui inter illa et crimina.—*Corderius.*

merely said, "Let him curse;" the man who cried to God, "Lo, *I* have sinned, and *I* have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me and against my father's house"? I maintain, then,<sup>1</sup> though it is an argument which I should not wish to press, that there is an *à priori* improbability that these cruel pitiless imprecations ever proceeded from David's lips. But let us now turn to the Psalm itself, and let us carefully and dispassionately examine its structure and statements.

1. The first thing that strikes us as we read it is that it divides itself into three sections, viz., verses 1-5, 6-19, 20-31; and that, of these, the middle one is of a very different complexion from the other two. One obvious difference may be stated here. In the two extreme sections the adversaries of the Psalmist are spoken of in the plural (as, *e.g.*, in verse 3, "They compassed about me," &c., and in verses 20, 29, "Let mine *adversaries*"), whereas in the middle section the pronouns are all in the singular; *i.e.*, the adversary is but one, "Let *him* be condemned" (verse 7); "*He* loved cursing" (verse 17).

2. We observe, secondly, that this section, which refers throughout to one person, and *only one*, is pre-

<sup>1</sup> It will probably be objected that in other Psalms, allowed to be David's, there are imprecations almost as sweeping and virulent. My answer is, that I have failed to discover anything like them, except it be in the one instance of Psa. lxix. 28, 29, and that, as regards these two verses, I am inclined to think they afford a parallel to the imprecations we are now discussing; *i.e.*, that they are not David's, but are merely *quoted* by him. His dying injunctions respecting Joab and Shimei again, whatever construction may be put upon them, are surely not to be compared with the curses of this Psalm. *They* do not, at any rate, overstep the line of physical retribution, nor do they include innocent parents and children in the doom of the guilty.

cisely the portion which contains the imprecations. They begin with the use of the singular and they end with it.<sup>1</sup>

3. Not only is this section difierent in its grammatical structure from the rest of the Psalm, but it also differs—unless I am much mistaken—from the spirit in which David generally writes. We miss here, for example, that continual reference to the Divine Being, to his presence and help, which characterizes his compositions. In the entire section there are but two references to the Sacred Name, and it is not absolutely necessary to suppose that the other breathings of vengeance were prayers addressed to God.

But let us now examine these different sections in detail. The *second*, as we have seen, is a tissue of imprecations. The *first* will be found to consist chiefly of complaints to God of the lies, the calumnies, the hatred of the Psalmist's adversaries. The *last* is composed partly of appeals to God to protect him against his adversaries (verses 21, 26), partly of complaints of the misery and distress to which they have reduced him (verses 22–25); and, finally, of expressions of his confidence that God will help and deliver him (verses 30, 31). Such are their general features. As to their details :

In the 1st verse we find the Psalmist imploring the aid and interference of Almighty God. “ Hold

<sup>1</sup> It may be well to point out here that verses 28, 29, though they seem to contain modified imprecations, do not do so in reality, for the imperatives, “ Let mine adversaries,” &c., should rather be translated as *futures*. That is to say, they are *predictions* of what will be, not prayers for what the writer wished to be. Dr. Perowne renders them as *present tenses*.

not thy peace," he cries, "O God of my praise." There is something, he intimates, which calls for God's intervention; something has happened which makes it desirable that God (the God whom he has long served and "praised") should speak out in his behalf. The 2nd verse explains what this is. It is that wicked men are *slander*ing him: it is because they are circulating *falsehoods* against him. "For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened *against me*;<sup>1</sup> they have spoken against me with a lying tongue." Observe, he here tells us, as distinctly as can be, that *he* is made the butt, the object, of slander and abuse. In the 3rd verse, as if to make this thought still more prominent, he repeats his statement, and somewhat amplifies it: "They compassed me about also with words of hatred, and fought against me without a cause." Notwithstanding, he says, that he has done nothing to deserve their hatred, they stab him on every side with their invectives, and war against him with their words.<sup>2</sup> In the 4th verse we have, substantially, a repetition of the same complaint. "For my love" (i.e., *instead* of, in *return* for, my love, פָּתַח אֶת־<sup>3</sup>), "they are my adversaries;" while the latter part of the verse describes his conduct towards them. "But I give myself unto *prayer*" (or, as the Original puts it with telling brevity, "but I . . . prayer").<sup>3</sup> What did the Psalmist do—what had he done, when men reproached and calumniated him?

<sup>1</sup> In the Hebrew some stress is laid on the words "against me," עַלְיִ פָּתַח).

<sup>2</sup> "A blow with a word strikes deeper than a blow with a sword."—Whichcote.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Psa. cxx. 7: "I . . . peace."

Did he revile again? Did he render railing for railing? The received opinion is that he did *that* at least (in verses 6–19), if not worse. *He* says here, however, that he did nothing of the kind. He says he simply betook himself unto prayer. It will be well to remember this, as it has an important bearing on the question at issue. In the 5th verse he practically repeats what he has more than once alleged already, viz., that this evil-speaking has been unmerited and unprovoked. “And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.” Now, so far, it will be allowed, our Psalmist has not spoken one vindictive word against his adversaries; on the contrary, he has merely stated, and that again and again, that they have spoken false and vindictive words against him. And he has also told us that his attitude towards them is expressed in the one word “*prayer*.” But now, at the 6th verse, according to the received interpretation, a sudden change comes over him. Utterly forgetful of what he has just said about “love” and “prayer;” forgetful too of his just complaint of the hatred and hard words of his enemies, he proceeds to heap upon them, or rather (as is supposed) upon some *one* of them—for he no longer speaks of “*them*,” but of “*him*”—the most frightful and merciless anathemas. “Set thou a wicked man over him, and let Satan stand at his right hand.” Then follows that string of shuddering curses in which the All-merciful God is entreated, by one so merciful and so much needing mercy as David, to shew no mercy to his enemy, but to scathe and ruin him and his, body and soul, for ever. Such is the usual exegesis of the Psalm.

Two questions, however, here suggest themselves to the careful reader. First, what are we to make of this sudden change from prayer to imprecation? Secondly, how are we to account for the abrupt transition from plural to singular?

Before suggesting any solution of these dilemmas, I must venture to remind the reader,—

1. That the Hebrew language, like the ancient Greek, has no clerical device, no conventional marks of any kind, to stamp a sentence as a quotation. "Inverted commas" were unknown to the ancients. The instances, consequently, are very numerous in the Bible where there is nothing to decide whether a sentence is a quotation or not—except the context.

2. Our translators, guided by the context, have indicated quotations in a large number of passages<sup>1</sup>—and in some where the quotation is by no means obvious at first sight—by the insertion of the word "saying," or its equivalent, in italics.

3. The passages where the word *should* be supplied, or where quotation marks should be used, are still more numerous. I have counted a score of passages,<sup>2</sup> for example, in Perowne's translation of

<sup>1</sup> As for example, Psa. ii. 2.; xxii. 7; xxvii. 8; xli. 8; lix. 7; cv. 15; cxxxvii. 3. Num. xxii. 10; xxiii. 7. I Sam. xviii. 22; xx. 16, 21. Job xv. 23. Prov. i. 21. Eccles. iv. 8. Cant. iii. 3; v. 2. Isa. xviii. 2. Jerem. vi. 17; xxxi. 3; xl. 5. Lam. ii. 15. Ezek. xxvii. 32. Dan. iv. 8. Hos. xiv. 8. This list is, of course, very imperfect. There are thirty such instances, some of them very striking, in the prophetic books alone.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., Psa. ii. 6; xiv. 4 (very abrupt); xx. and xxi. (Liturgical Psalms); xxii. 22; xxxix. 4 (see Perowne's Note); xli. 5; xlvi. 10; lli. 6; lxxv. 2; lxxxii. 6 ("The words of God follow without any indication of a change of speakers."—Perowne); lxxxvii. 4 ("We have the same abrupt introduction of the Divine speaker."—Ib.); lxxxix. 3; xcii. 14; cxxxii. 3, 11.

the Psalms, where he employs either the one or the other. It will be evident, therefore, that nothing is more common in Holy Scripture than for us to find a quotation without anything but the sense to distinguish it as such.

4. It should also be stated that the Psalmists are very much in the habit of citing and transcribing the reproaches of their enemies. No doubt it afforded them consolation to acquaint their Almighty Friend and Helper with their sufferings in this respect. At any rate, they refer to the false accusations of their adversaries in a large number of passages; in not a few they repeat their *ipsissima verba.*<sup>1</sup>

Now, can we not find in these facts an explanation of the break, of the abrupt transition, at verses 6 and 20 of this Psalm? Is it possible that the portion marked out by the double transition (for in verse 20 we have a change back from singular to plural as distinct as the change from plural to singular in verse 6),—is it possible that the middle section, *i.e.*, the imprecatory portion of the Psalm, is a quotation, a citation, by David of the imprecations of his enemies? Is it possible that this perplexing and distressing Psalm presents us, after all, not with his maledictions upon them, but with their maledictions upon him?

Not only do I hold this interpretation to be quite legitimate, I hold it to be by far the more natural and reasonable interpretation, and that for the following reasons:—

<sup>1</sup> The following may serve as specimens, x. 6; xxii. 8; xxxv. 21; xli. 5; lxxi. 11; lxxiii. 11.

The supposition of a quotation is, to say the least, the most satisfactory way of accounting for the double transition just referred to. It is not contended that this break is absolutely inexplicable, except upon this supposition ; for in Psa. iv. 12, *as it now stands*, we have a transition in some respects similar to that of verse 6, and *there* there is no quotation.<sup>1</sup> But in Psa. xiv. 4; xxii. 8; xli. 5; lxxv. 2; lxxxii. 6; lxxxvii. 4, we have also similar transitions ; and in all these cases the Commentators (Perowne, &c.) confess that we have quotations. But our averment is that this supposition avoids one or two serious difficulties : the difficulty of believing that the Psalmist can have passed, *per saltum*, from words of prayer and piety to words of bitter execration ; the difficulty of accounting for the use of the singular, when hitherto he has invariably spoken of his adversaries in the plural, and the like ; and we also aver that it affords the most easy and natural explanation of the Psalm. Insert the word “*saying*” at the beginning of verse 6, and all difficulties immediately vanish. Then everything is coherent and straightforward, and the 6th and following verses dovetail with the verses preceding. “They have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love, *saying*, Set thou a wicked man over him, and let Satan stand at his right hand,” &c. He has been complaining of the “words of hatred,” of the “lying tongues” of others ; what can be more natural, what more in accordance with his custom,

<sup>1</sup> If Ewald’s rearrangement of this Psalm be accepted, then we have no instance of any transition at all similar to that of Psa. cix. without a quotation, except Psa. xxxv. 8. See, however, Psa. xli. 6.

than that he should presently quote these “words of hatred” to Almighty God?

And I find a minute but interesting confirmation of this view in three verbal coincidences which I observe between the first and second sections of the Psalm. In the 2nd verse we read, “For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me.” But the Hebrew text, strictly rendered, would run here, “A mouth of a wicked man and a mouth of deceit” (*פִי רָשָׁע וְפִי מַרְקֵה*) —“den Mund eines *Frevlers*,” Ewald translates it). Now the natural expression, the words we might have expected (and which some consequently have proposed to substitute here for the Received Text in order to bring the two clauses into harmony), would have been *פִי רָשָׁע*, “a mouth of *wickedness*.” “Stier, however,” says Perowne (vol. ii. p. 247), “thinks that the expression, ‘mouth of the wicked’ may have been purposely employed with reference to the wicked man against whom the Psalmist prays.” Accepting this suggestion,—that the variation was made designedly for a special purpose,—the view I am advocating enables me to assign, as I venture to think, a more adequate reason for this curious change. For in verse 6—the first of the imprecations pronounced *against* the Psalmist, according to our supposition,—we read, “Set thou a wicked man” (*רָשָׁע*) “over him.” Again, in verse 7, the second verse of the imprecations, we find, “When he is judged, let him be condemned,” literally, “let him go forth a *wicked man*” (*רָשָׁע עִזָּת*). In each of the two first verses of the imprecatory section, that is to say, we find the word “wicked” (*רָשָׁע*). Now, while allowing that the

change in verse 2 *might* have been made merely for the sake of the paronomasia, it would have been very awkward and inappropriate, to say the least, for the person who *pronounced* the imprecations to have made the change, because it could hardly have failed to suggest the idea that while he bitterly complained of the פָּנָצֵן, he was an exemplification of the פָּנָצֵן himself. Suppose, on the other hand, that the repeated mention of "a wicked man" (עִוְרָן) is made by his enemy, whose words he cites, and we can comprehend at once the object and propriety of the change. "They have opened against me a mouth of a *wicked man*; . . . saying, Set thou a *wicked man* over him; . . . let him come forth a *wicked man*."

A second verbal coincidence, which, taken with the preceding and with the still more remarkable ones to be presently noticed, makes this supposition almost a matter of certainty, is the following. In verse 4 we read, "They are my *adversaries*" (עֲשֵׂנִים). In verse 6 we find, "Let an *adversary*" (Authorized Version, "Satan," שָׁטָן) "stand at his right hand." Now suppose both words to proceed from the *same mouth*, then we have the unfortunate circumstance that the man who has just before complained of his adversaries, here goes out of his way, by his unhappy choice of words, to lay himself open to the very charge which he makes against them. Suppose, on the other hand, that in the 6th verse he cites their calumnies, then how much greater is the force and appropriateness of the יְאַבְּנָה of verse 4, "They are my *adversaries*; . . . saying, Let an *adversary* stand," &c. The *complaint* of

verse 4 seems to have been suggested by the *curse* of verse 6.

The third coincidence still remains to be considered. In verse 4 the Psalmist declares that his one work has been, and will be, “*prayer*” (תְּפִלָּה). It is not by an accident, surely, that in the 7th verse—again at the very commencement of the imprecations—we find “Let his *prayer*” (תְּפִלָּתוֹ) “become sin.”

Now suppose we grant that any *one* of these singular coincidences, taken separately, might well be accidental, is it within the range of probability that all *the three* can be so? Taken collectively, is not the presumption in favour of a designed deliberate reference almost overwhelming?

It is in the latter part of the Psalm, however, that we find the strongest confirmation of this view. The curses, as we have seen, extend to verse 19. With verse 20 comes another abrupt change. It is not strongly marked in our English Version, indeed, being obscured by the words in italics, which here, as so often elsewhere, only serve to darken the sense. Omitting these intercalary words, however, the verse stands, “This . . . the reward”—i.e., this *will be* the reward<sup>1</sup>—“of mine adversaries from the Lord, and”—observe—“of them that speak evil against my soul.” No sooner do the curses terminate, that is to say, than we find the Psalmist complaining, as he did before they commenced, of those who “spoke evil against his soul.” Now, allow that the preceding curses are those of his adversaries against him, and everything is natural and accordant.

<sup>1</sup> Perowne translates: “This is the reward,” &c.

They have been speaking evil against his soul, i.e., his life (*רֶאשֶׁת*). They have been praying that his "days may be few," &c. But according to the current interpretation, nothing could be more unfortunate and *mal à propos* than these words. "Speak evil against my soul!" Nay, but it is the Psalmist has been speaking evil, and what evil! against *their* souls. He has been dealing out anathemas right and left, and now, forsooth, he complains of their cursing him, and says God will reward them for it. But, surely, if *they* will have a recompense for evil-speaking, *he* will not go unpunished! Observe, again, the transition to the plural, "Mine *adversaries*." But he has just been anathematizing *one* adversary, according to the received opinion! Above all, let us examine the Hebrew word which is here translated "reward." It is *נְבָרֵךְ*, which Gesenius ("Thesaurus," s.v.) says is the synonym for *מְנֻבָּרֵךְ*, "work," and which he renders into Latin by (1) *quæ quis facit, agit*, and (2) *merces laboris*, and into German by "*Das Thun des Menschen*." In nine out of the eleven passages cited by him,<sup>1</sup> it is translated in our Version by "work" or "labour," in one passage, "wages," and in the remaining, which is the passage we are now discussing, "reward." The LXX. render it generally by *ἔργον*, once by *πόνος*, once by *μόχθος*, and once by *μίσθος*. They translate *this* passage, *τὸντο τὸ ἔργον τῶν ἐνδιαβαλλόντων με παρὰ Κυρίου*; while the Vulgate renders it, "*Hoc opus eorum qui detrahunt mihi apud Dominum.*" The primary, the almost invariable, meaning con-

<sup>1</sup> Prov. x. 16; xi. 18. Psa. xvii. 4; xxviii. 5. Isa. xl. 10; xliv. lxi. 8; lxxv. 7. Jerem. xxxi. 16. Levit. xix. 13.

sequently is “work,” “doing;” the secondary and remotely-derived meaning is “wage for work.” Now, assign the word its primary and usual meaning here, the meaning which both the LXX. and the Vulgate assign it, and it is conclusive in favour of the interpretation here advocated, “This”—the string of imprecations just quoted—“is the work of mine adversaries from the Lord.” It is conclusive, because it is irreconcileable with the ordinary interpretation. Assign the word again its secondary meaning, *merces laboris*, “wage for work,” and, though not so conclusive, it is equally apposite. “This”—the doom they have denounced against me—“shall be the reward, for their work,”—of imprecation, of “speaking evil against my soul”—“of mine adversaries from the Lord.”

But let us pass on to the succeeding verses of this third section. The next verse, the 21st, surely betrays a very different spirit from that which breathes in these fierce anathemas. I do find in it something akin to the sentiment of verses 1 and 4, but nothing resembling the truculent spirit of verses 6–19. “But do thou for me, O God the Lord, for thy name’s sake; because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me.” How naturally such an appeal would come from the person reviled! how unbecoming it would be to the reviler! And, again (verse 22), “I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.” If David was the object of these curses, we can well understand his speaking thus—such reproaches might well have broken his heart; but it is difficult to believe that the man who now speaks so dejectedly, so submissively, is the same man who

but just now spoke so hotly and virulently. More than that, we observe in these words, as we think, a distinct and double reference to the charge of verse 16. He has there been accused of "persecuting the poor and needy" (צַדִּיקִים וְצַדִּיקָה). He here replies, as I understand him, that it is just the other way. He is rather the poor and needy who is persecuted. "For it is I who am poor and needy" (אֵנִי—צַדִּיקִי וְצַדִּיקָה אֲנִי being emphatic = *cgo hic*). He has also been accused, in the same verse, of persecuting "the broken-hearted."<sup>1</sup> Have we not a possible allusion to this in the following clause: "My heart is wounded within me"? Taken by themselves, it is true, the words do not present us with any striking coincidences; but taken in connection with the coincidence just pointed out, they are at least suggestive of a reference.

But the whole of this concluding section of the Psalm harmonizes, as it seems to me, with the first part, and is alien from the spirit of the second. The 23rd and 24th verses, *e.g.*, describe very forcibly the condition to which a man might easily be reduced by such enmity and such calumnies as those recorded in verses 6–19; but it seems hard to believe that one who has dealt out curses so courageously and self-reliantly should now, in almost the next breath, assume the attitude and language of complete and helpless dependence on God: should pray God, if I may use the expression, *in formâ pauperis*. Verse 25 again reminds us—not that he has reproached another, but of the reproaches of others heaped upon him: "I became a reproach

\* See Perowne's translation of Verse 16.

unto them." The appeal for help in verse 26, too, would surely proceed much more fittingly from the subject than from the author of the imprecations. The 27th verse explains the 20th. In the latter we read: "This is the doing of mine adversaries from the Lord," *i.e.*, with the Lord's sanction and by his appointment (**מִתְחָדָה**). Cf. Josh. xi. 20, *Heb.*, and 2 Sam. xvi. 10). The 27th verse stands: "And they shall know that this is thy hand, that thou, Lord, hast done it." The 28th is still more to our purpose: "Let them curse, but bless thou." It is as if he said: "I have recited their imprecations against me—what matters it? they are welcome to curse, if only God blesses me." In the 29th verse I find two more verbal coincidences too striking to be passed over. The 18th verse reads: "He clothed" (**נִילַבֵּךְ**) "himself with cursing." The 29th, taking up the word, replies: "Let mine adversaries be clothed" (**וַיְלַבֵּשׁ**) "with shame." The 19th verse, again—the last of the Imprecatory section—runs: "Let it be unto him as the garment that covereth" (**עַל־עֵינָיו**) "him". This 29th verse makes reply: "Let them cover" (**וְתִפְצֹרְנֵם**) "themselves with their own confusion."

Now if we regard these different verses as having all proceeded from the same speaker, we are landed in this difficulty, that we have here a repetition so much weaker than the original as to have almost the effect of an anti-climax.<sup>1</sup> This difficulty attaches to the verse from the mere "change" from imprecation to the "expression of a wish," or rather to the statement of a fact; but it attaches, surely, in

<sup>1</sup> Ferowne

a double degree when these verbal coincidences are taken into account. It comes, in fact, to this, that the Psalmist goes over the ground a second time, but strange to say, *tosses everything down*. Regard the verses, on the other hand, as proceeding from different speakers, and this dilemma is avoided ; the repetitions are easily accounted for ; we have then words of imprecation echoed back in subdued and chastened words of prayer. But I find—unless I am much deceived—two more such coincidences in the last verse. The 6th verse, the head and front of the imprecations, contains the words, “Let Satan stand at his right hand.” This last verse, with a manifest reference surely to the 6th, reads : “For he shall stand”—*i.e.*, the Lord (see verse 30), not Satan—“at the right hand of the poor.” (See verse 22 : “I am poor and needy.”) Again, the 7th verse reads : “When he shall be judged” (*רְאֵתָנָה*), “let him be condemned.” The last verse, having these words in view, replies : “To save him from them that judge” (*רְאֵבָנָה*) “his soul.” Now, what can we conclude from these striking and repeated references, as well as from the sentiments which they embody, but that we have here the Psalmist’s meek rejoinder to the anathemas of his adversaries—his answer to them “out of their own mouths”? For these coincidences, I take it, are too many and too marked to permit the idea of their being accidental. The allusions in some cases are obvious. And their evidence, in its cumulative weight, is, as I submit, conclusive in favour of the view I have here advanced.

It now remains for me to notice one or two

objections which have been raised, or which may be raised, to this interpretation.

Two are stated by Merrick<sup>1</sup> :—

*First.* “That it is difficult to believe that the Inspired Author of the Psalm has repeated the impious speeches of his enemies through almost half the Psalm.”

*Second.* “That it is more difficult still to believe that any part of such impious speeches should be quoted as prophetic Scripture by an Apostle.”

As to the first of these the answer is obvious, viz., that if it be “difficult to believe that the Inspired Author of the Psalm” *quoted* these “impious speeches”—and it seems to be allowed that they are “impious”—it is surely less difficult than to believe that he himself *uttered* them. It must be easier to conceive that he repeated and *depreciated* them, than that he composed and *impreached* them. But, secondly, I find no difficulty in regarding these words as a quotation. For it is the habit of the Psalmists—as we have already seen—to cite the very words of their enemies. And the *length* of the passage in question—half the Psalm, if you like—is hardly conclusive against its being a citation. In the 39th Psalm we have a quotation ten verses long,<sup>2</sup> and this is fourteen verses. Surely, the odd four verses are not to decide the question. Or, if they are, then let it be considered that in Psa. l. 7–22 we have two quotations covering *sixteen* consecutive verses.

The second difficulty raised by Mr. Merrick is settled for us by the fact that not unsimilar words,

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Bishop Lowth, quoted by Keate.

<sup>2</sup> See Perowne's Note on Psalm xxxix. 4.

harsh and cruel words, to say the least, are quoted, and quoted apparently as prophetic Scripture, by another Apostle. St. Paul says (Gal. iv. 30): "Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." Now if Sarah's "grievous" envious words could be quoted as Scripture, surely these might be so quoted also.

But the question here presents itself: Are these words quoted as *prophetic Scripture*? It is allowed that they are referred to by St. Peter—we have admitted that already: but in what way? "It is written"—these are his words—"it is written in the Book of Psalms . . . his bishopric let another take." Well, it *is* written there. But because it is written there and quoted here, does it follow that it was a specific prophecy of the doom of Judas Iscariot? May it not have been quoted—as the Scriptures, we know, often were quoted—by way of accommodation? Nay, is it too much to say positively that it was so quoted? For consider: St. Peter here combines into one sentence fragments of two different Psalms: he changes a plural into a singular, to suit his purpose, viz., "*their* habitation" into "*his* habitation;" and, lastly, he changes "let none dwell in their tents" to "let no man dwell therein." Do not these facts prove that St. Peter cited the passage as apposite and illustrative, but by no means as prophetic?

But it is urged, in answer to this, that Acts i. 16 proves these words to have been prophetic. "This scripture must needs have been fulfilled" ( $\epsilon\delta\epsilon\iota$ )

*πληρωθῆναι τὴν γραφὴν ταυτην. κ.τ.λ.)* “which the Holy Ghost spake before *concerning Judas.*” But the first question which suggests itself is: Does the “this scripture” of verse 16 refer to the two scriptures quoted in verse 20? It is more than doubtful whether it does. For, to begin with, the best manuscripts (ABC<sup>1</sup>) and versions omit the word “this” (*ταύτην*). (2) The reference in our English Bibles is to Psa. xli. 9, not to Psa. cix. 8; and some Commentators (Hammond, *e.g.*, in “Annotat.”) understand the Apostle to have had the former passage in view. But supposing we admit, for the sake of argument, that “this scripture spoken before by the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David,” *does* refer to the scripture quoted at verse 20, “his bishopric let another take,” &c.—this does not fasten the *authorship* (in the sense of the original utterance) of Psa. cix. 8 upon him. That verse could, with perfect propriety, be spoken of as David’s, seeing that David compiled and arranged the whole Psalm, even if that particular expression happened to be a quotation. The Apostle found in the Greek copies of the Old Testament scriptures a Psalm, the 109th, ascribed, and rightly ascribed, to David. The whole of that Psalm he regarded as inspired scripture, just as St. Paul regarded Sarah’s scornful words as scripture. What, then, should hinder him from describing it as “spoken before by the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David”?

But suppose we go a step further and admit that this scripture *was* prophetic of Judas, does even that decide one way or the other as to the authorship of that part of the Psalm? It merely amounts

to this, that, by whomsoever uttered, it foreshadowed something relating to Judas Iscariot, and that it was fulfilled in him. But might not that something be foreshadowed, and in due course be fulfilled, though the words were originally spoken, not by David, but by David's enemy?

The argument that these words are prophetic, however, and that these curses, therefore, are all to be interpreted of Judas, seems to me to be fraught with difficulties. Not to insist upon the manifestly loose accommodating way in which the Apostle cites the words, and other similar considerations, this view lands us in the terrible dilemma of putting these anathemas into the lips of our Lord Jesus Christ. For if Judas is the person aimed at in these imprecations, then it follows that David, who denounced him, is herein a type of our Holy and Merciful Redeemer; and so we are compelled to believe that He who said of others "Father, forgive them," said of him, "Let his prayer become sin;" that He who charged his disciples to "love their enemies and to bless those who cursed them," Himself prayed, "Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered before the Lord, and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out." So that we only shift the difficulty, and increase it a hundred-fold, if we adopt the supposition "favoured by the majority of Commentators, ancient and modern,"<sup>1</sup> that the Psalm is not "the language of David, but the language of Christ, exercising his office of Judge;" that it is, in fact, the prophetic foreshadowing of the solemn words, "Woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed; it were

<sup>1</sup> Perowne.

good for that man if he had not been born." Well does Perowne remark, "The strain which such a view compels us to put on much of the language of the Psalm ought to have led long since to its abandonment." But what shall we say of the strain which such a view compels us to put on the character of our Lord Christ? Which of us will presume to ascribe such "fierce vindictiveness" to Him?

We must now turn, however, to another objection, and one of a different character from the preceding. "Could such charges," it will be asked, "ever be made, could such curses ever be levelled, against David, against a man so well known, so popular, so highly distinguished as he?" My answer is, that not only *could* such charges be made, but very similar, if not indeed more serious, charges actually *were* made against him. In 2 Sam. xvi. 5-14 we have, I believe, a history of the very occasion when these curses were pronounced and of the circumstances which suggested the Psalm: "And when King David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the Son of Gera; he came forth, and *cursed still as he came*. . . . And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial: the Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man." I cannot help thinking that these cruel words, and the many more words like unto them which would be spoken at that season by

Shimei and others of the adherents of Absalom or of the partisans of the house of Saul, were the originals of the curses which the Psalmist has recorded, and recorded because of their very falsity and cruelty, in this 109th Psalm.

But let us now see whether we can discover anything in the Psalm which harmonizes with the history of 2 Sam. xvi., always remembering that the Psalmist has forewarned us that the charges brought against him were "lying" and "deceitful" (verse 2; cf. also Psa. xxxv. 11, and Ixix. 12).

It will be admitted, then, that verses 1-5 would describe exactly the words and deeds of Shimei. His was a "mouth of a wicked man and a mouth of deceit;" his were "words of hatred and a lying tongue." But in addition to their words of hatred the Psalmist says his adversaries "fought" (literally, "warred," *צָבַר וְיִלְכֹּד*, *ἐπολέμησάν με*, LXX.) against him. Now it is probable that the word is here used *figuratively*, of the war of *words*, as we have interpreted it above. But we see an additional reason for the word, or, rather, a special appropriateness in it, if our conjecture is a correct one, that it was used of Shimei and his party, for they, literally as well as tropically, "fought" against the Psalmist. But it is in the imprecations themselves that I find the closest correspondence between the Psalm and the History. We can well understand, e.g., how verses 6, 7, may have been spoken by Shimei or some such adversary. David is now fleeing for his life (2 Sam. xvi. 11). They hope that before long he will be taken prisoner, and brought to trial and deposed. Hence the prayer,

"Set thou a wicked man over him" (בְּנֵבֶן). Cf. בְּרַכָּה, verse 8: upon which Perowne's Note<sup>1</sup> is: "Set, that is in an official capacity; . . . appoint as judge, or set over him with power and authority to punish"), "and let an adversary stand at his right hand" ("let him not only have an unrighteous judge, but a malicious accuser."—Perowne). "When he is judged, let him be condemned, and let his prayer" (to God for mercy and help) "become sin." They know it is David's wont to pray (*cf.* verse 4, "but I . . . *prayer*"). They here express the hope that his prayer may be disregarded. In verse 8, they pray for his deposition and speedy death. "Let his days be few, and his office" (בְּקִרְבָּה), "implying that the person held a position of some importance."—Perowne) "let another take." So that we find all these imprecations have a peculiar suitability, if understood of King David at the time of his flight. The person against whom they were levelled had an office, an office from which some were trying to depose him: he was a pious man, one who would pray; he was not unlikely to have a judge and an accuser: surely it is none other than David who is here described to us. Passing on to verse 14, "Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord, and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out," may we not find a clue to the interpretation of these words in the history of David's ancestors, the history recorded in the Book of Ruth? For among his "fathers" (the word אֲבֹת has a very extended signification, and is used of *any male* ancestor, just as אָבֵד is

<sup>1</sup> I quote these Notes because the support which they lend to this theory is quite unintentional, and therefore all the more powerful. Dr. Perowne is no advocate of the view taken here.

of any female) were Mahlon and Chilion, the sons of Elimelech. They had committed “iniquity” by intermarrying with Moabitish women, and, according to Jewish belief,<sup>1</sup> had paid the penalty thereof in their premature death. His “mother” in a direct line was Ruth the Moabitess. Her marriage with Boaz was not esteemed to have been without sin (*cf.* Ruth iv. 12). It is to this sin, according to the Rabbins, that David refers when he says (Psa. li. 5), “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in *sin* did my mother conceive me.” Now remembering that these genealogical facts were notorious, and considering the estimation in which the Jews held them, what could be more natural than for some follower or member of the house of Saul, resenting not merely the change of dynasty, but still more the intrusion upon the throne of one who was not of pure Hebrew blood, to cast this reproach in David’s teeth, “Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord, and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out”? When Boaz espoused Ruth to be his wife, he declared his object to be “that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren.” The partisans of Saul remembering, it may be, these words, or at any rate deprecating their fulfilment, pray that “in the generation following their name may be blotted out” (verse 13, where observe the paronomasia, *אֶת־חַדְרֵי־הָעָמִדִים*, and *וְעַמְדֵה*, *תִּמְצֵא*, verse 14). And I am strengthened in this interpretation by observing that this supposition affords an explanation of what is otherwise almost inexplicable, viz., the extension of the curses from the man to his ancestors and

<sup>1</sup> Targum on Ruth i. 5.

descendants. We can well understand why the members of the dispossessed house of Saul should desire the extinction of David's *race*; they had strong political reasons for desiring it: we can understand why *they* should pray that the "iniquity of his fathers might be remembered with the Lord." That iniquity, in their belief, had already received its partial recompence; it had cost two of his ancestors their lives; it had threatened the extinction of the family: they pray that it may now bear its full fruit, by bringing down the judgment of death on David's children, so that "their name may soon be blotted out."<sup>1</sup> All this is intelligible and consistent. But why David should so earnestly desire the complete excision, root and branch, of the family of Doeg or Ahithophel, or any of his enemies, it is difficult to conceive; and it is still harder to understand why he should comprehend the fathers and mother in his curse. I submit, then, that the explanation of verses 13, 14 by the history of *David's* ancestry, solves a difficulty which the received interpretation creates.

But let us pass on to the next verse: "Because that he remembered not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart."<sup>2</sup> Now, making allowance for the exaggeration and distortion inevitable to such charges as these, it is remarkable surely that this is precisely what David had done. The reader will have no difficulty in recalling events in David's

<sup>1</sup> "If I see rightly, the object [of the curse on the fathers] is to heighten its effects on the children."—*Perowne*.

<sup>2</sup> Perowne's translation is: "But persecuted the afflicted man and the poor, and the broken hearted, to put [them] to death."

life which would give a show of justice at least to this grave indictment. There was the one little ewc lamb of Uriah the Hittite, upon which, by his own shewing, he had "*had no pity*" (2 Sam. xii. 6). There was Uriah himself whom he had persecuted and slain<sup>1</sup> with the sword of the children of Ammon. And though David had no part in the assassination of the great captain of the house of Saul, Abner the son of Ner, and took measures to testify publicly his abhorrence of the deed (2 Sam. iii. 37), yet what so likely as that the "mouth of the wicked" should accuse him, notwithstanding, of conniving at his death? We know that Shimei *did* accuse him of being "a man of blood" and a "man of Belial:" surely that was as *grave* a charge as this of verse 16, and more than that, it is a very similar charge. The latter then may well have been the echo of the former.

But it will here be objected that whatever adaptation we may think we see in any of verses 6–16 to the case of David, surely there can be none in verses 17–19.<sup>2</sup> He was not a man, it will be said, who "loved cursing," or "who clothed himself with cursing." Such a charge is absurd when made against him. I answer, (1) Such a charge, however, is made against him by all those who ascribe the imprecations of this Psalm to him. (2) There are

<sup>1</sup> לְמֹתָה, verse 16 ("to do to death," Poel), would be a singularly fitting word to use of the murder of Uriah.

<sup>2</sup> The Authorized Version is here somewhat misleading. "The verbs cannot be rendered in these two verses, as in the English Version, as optatives. The tenses are past tenses, and have been so rendered by the LXX."—Perowne. "He has loved cursing," we may imagine some Shimei to have said; "and it came unto him," . . . "he clothed himself with cursing and it came," &c.

imprecations in other Psalms which, though very different in spirit and sweep from these, are indicative of a temper which might afford an unscrupulous adversary some grounds for affirming that “he loved cursing.” (3) He expressly tells us that they “spoke against him” with “a lying tongue:” he prepares us beforehand, *i.e.*, for groundless and wanton accusations. So that if some of the curses appear to us to be altogether inapplicable to him; if the charge they contain against him is a pure and malicious invention, we see in this fact a positive corroboration of the views here advanced.

In the third section of the Psalm, the whole of which, it will be conceded, *would* have formed, even if it did not, a most appropriate prayer, under the circumstances in which the fugitive and broken-hearted king was then placed, I find the following marks of adaptation:—

1. The sentiment of verse 21,—“But do thou,” &c., is an exact parallel with that of David when he was cursed by Shimei. “It may be that the Lord will look upon mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day.” (2 Sam. xvi. 12.)

2. In verse 23 we read, “*I am gone* like the shadow,” &c. The original word (נִצְרָאַת) is rendered by Perowne (Note on verse 23), “I am made to go hence.” He also adds: “This passive form (which only occurs here) denotes *external compulsion*.” Consequently, the word would be a most appropriate one in the lips of a banished man, a man fleeing, as David then was, for his life. The same may be said of נִצְרָאֵת, the next word, which

*AN APOLOGY FOR THE VINDICTIVE PSALM.*

Perowne renders: "I have been *driven away* as the locust;" and which Gesenius translates, "to be shaken out, *i.e.*, *cast out from a land*" (*cf.* Job xxxviii. 13). Both words exactly describe the case of David at that juncture; both help to connect the Psalm accordingly with the period of the flight from Absalom.

3. Verse 24 runs: "My knees are weak through fasting." In 2 Sam. xvi. 14 we find—"And the king . . . came weary," &c. (בָּשָׂר, faint, *languescentes*), and from 2 Sam. xvii. 29 we learn that subsequently at Mahanaim "the people was hungry and thirsty and weary in the wilderness." Surely we have here another tittle of evidence, of little consequence perhaps in itself, but not to be disregarded when taken in combination with other expressions. Surely, the History helps us to understand why David should describe himself as "weak through fasting," and speak of his flesh as "failing of fatness" (literally, "hath fallen away from fat"). And, therefore, when we read in verse 25, "I became a reproach unto them," can we resist the conclusion that it is the curses and reproaches of Shimei to which he is referring?

4. "Thou, Lord, hast done it" (verse 27). What have we here but the poetical version of 2 Sam. xvi. 10, "The Lord hath said unto him, Curse David"? Similarly, "Let them curse, but bless thou" (verse 28), is assuredly the echo of verses 11, 12 of the History, "Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be the Lord will . . . requite me good for his cursing this day."

5. In 2 Sam. xvii. 14, "For the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel,"

we may see the promised realization of the Psalmist's confident hope expressed in verse 31, the concluding verse of the Psalm, "For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul."

We see, then, how the Psalm, from the first verse to the last, fits into the folds of the narrative of David's flight. The key turns without the slightest strain in the wards of the lock. Is it therefore an unwarrantable conclusion that Psalm cix. reflects the "hatred," the "lying," the "curses," the "prayers," of those terrible days "of trouble and rebuke and blasphemy," the days of Absalom's rebellion? and, consequently, have we not abundant grounds for believing that these "impious speeches" are not David's against Shimei, but those of Shimei and others against David?

But there is still a fraction more of evidence in favour of this view. We have seen that this Psalm was designed to be adapted to music and sung by the Tabernacle choir. The inscription proves this. How very probable that David, after his restoration, should entrust to the sweet singers, and through them consecrate to the high praises of God, a lyric which embalmed for all time the distress, the reproach, the agonized entreaties of those days of dethronement and despair.<sup>1</sup> How very unlikely that he should devote to such holy purposes a hymn which merely stereotyped his fierce hate, his passionate yearning for revenge, his cruel undiscriminating maledictions.

My "Apology" for the Vindictive Psalm is now

<sup>1</sup> Kenricott calls the Psalm "the thanksgiving of an innocent man."

before my readers. It is submitted to them with no little diffidence. It labours, or seems to labour, I am well aware, under the manifest disadvantage of being novel and in some sense, perhaps, original—a consideration which, with many minds, will suffice to ensure its summary rejection. We shall be reminded by some that “what is new is not true, and what is true is not new.” It will be asked by others—indeed, it has been asked already—whether it is possible that the Christian Church for so many hundred years can have been reading and chanting these curses as if they were David’s against Shimei, when all the time they are Shimei’s against David. But to this I think it may fairly be replied that we have no evidence that the now current interpretation has been received *semper, ubique, et ab omnibus*. The *εργον* of the LXX. and the *opus* of the Vulgate in verse 20 would seem to point the other way. It is possible, therefore, that the seemingly new interpretation is really the old, and that to adopt it is merely *stare super vias antiquas*. It cannot be denied, seeing that there are no outward and visible signs of a quotation in the Psalm, that the fact of the imprecatory section being a citation, if such were the fact, might easily be obscured and lost sight of. It is a mistake that the cursory unobservant reader would be almost sure to make. But allowing, as of course we must do, that for many centuries the curses were popularly and universally believed to have been David’s; while admitting that that is some presumption against this new interpretation, we deny that it is any proof of its falsity. For how many centuries was it believed that the world was created in six

solar days? For how many centuries was it an article of the faith that the sun went round the earth every four-and-twenty hours? Yet it is now admitted on all hands that the Bible teaches neither the one nor the other. It is quite possible, therefore, that the interpretation sanctioned by long prescription may be at fault on other questions as well as these.

"It is not at all incredible," says Bishop Butler, "that a book which has been so long in the possession of mankind should contain many truths as yet undiscovered. . . . Possibly it might be intended that events, as they come to pass, should open and ascertain the meaning of several parts of Scripture."<sup>1</sup>

The interpretation, then, of the Vindictive Psalm must depend upon evidence, not upon authority.

JOSEPH HAMMOND.

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### THE BOOK OF RUTH.

#### V.—IN THE GATE.

*Chapter iv. verses 1–22.*

THE gates of ancient cities played many parts: they were guard-houses; they were markets; they were courts of justice; they were places for public deliberation and audience. Necessarily, therefore, they were massively built, with recessed chambers, or divans, in the sides, and often with chambers also above the arch. Here the inhabitants of the city were wont to assemble either for the transaction of business or to hear and tell the news. Here the

<sup>1</sup> "Analogy," Part ii. chapter 3.

judges sat and administered justice to all comers. Here even kings came to give audience to other kings, or to their ambassadors. So that the Gate played a great part, not only in the defence, but also in the public economy, of the city. Some faint resemblance to these ancient Gates may be found in the structures called "Bars," in London and Southampton, though these modern gates are much smaller than their ancient prototypes; and some faint reminiscence of their character as seats of judicial and royal authority, in the titles Sublime "*Porte*," or the Ottoman "*Porte*"—*porte* meaning *gate*—by which the Government of Turkey is still designated.

The scene of Chapter iv. is the Gate of Bethlehem. We have already followed Boaz to the Harvest-Field and the Threshing-Floor; we have found in his bearing many illustrations of the simple and primitive customs of the antique time in which he lived. And as we now study this Chapter—a veritable cabinet of antiquities—and follow him to the Gate, and mark how he prosecutes a legal suit, we shall once more be impressed by the simplicity of the ancient Hebrew manners, a simplicity, however, quite compatible with a certain dignified and stately formality.

As we are to "assist" at a legal suit, it will be well for us to acquaint ourselves, at the very outset, with the law to which an appeal is to be made. This law is the law of the *Goelim*,—the law which governs all acts of exchange and redemption. So far as we are at present concerned with it, this law demanded that the nearest kinsman of a childless widow should marry her, even though he himself were already married;

and that the eldest son born of this marriage should, in due time, enter on the inheritance and perpetuate the name of his mother's *first* husband.<sup>1</sup> The law was designed to prevent the extinction of any Hebrew family and the alienation of any family estate. All male blood-relations of the deceased man were reckoned as among his *goelim*, or redeemers; but the nearest of all was the *goel*, and was the first who was bound to redeem his kinsman's name and inheritance. If, however, he refused to redeem, then the next kinsman succeeded to his right and duty; but he himself, for his refusal, was put to an open shame. But let us have the very statute itself before us. It is recorded in Deut. xxv. 5-10, and runs thus:—

*If kinsmen dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry*

<sup>1</sup> This singular, and, if judged by modern standards, immoral, law of Levirate marriage, like other of the laws of Moses—*e.g.*, the law of divorce—which have been called in question, was a concession to “the hardness of their hearts” for whom he legislated; and so far from being a license to immorality, it was really a limitation of the current immoralities of the time. In ages long anterior to his, a wife, being *bought* from her parents, became the property of her husband, and too valuable a property to be given up at his death. With other property she descended to his heirs, commonly his brothers, any one of whom might possess her; some tribes going even to the shameful excess of all possessing her in common. Michaelis, in his Commentaries on the Laws of Moses (Book iii. Chap. v. Art. 98), has well brought out the process and advance by which this hateful custom grew into a legalized system of Levirate marriages. This system obtained among the Canaanitish tribes for centuries before the time of Moses, as is proved by the shocking story recorded in Genesis xxxviii. All that the great legislator of the Hebrews is responsible for is, that he set still straiter limits to the prevailing custom, including among the duties of the *Goel* that he, and he only, should “raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead might not be cut off from among his brethren.”

outside [i.e., outside the family circle], unto a stranger; her husband's kinsman shall go in unto her, and take her to wife, and perform the duty of a husband's kinsman unto her. And it shall be that the first-born whom she beareth shall stand upon the name [i.e., take the place, or arise in the place] of the kinsman who is dead, that his name be not wiped out of Israel. And if the man like not to take his kinsman's wife, then let his kinsman's wife go up to the gate, unto the elders, and say, My husband's kinsman refuseth to raise up unto his kinsman a name in Israel; he will not do the duty of my husband's kinsman. Then the elders of the city shall call him, and speak unto him; and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her; then shall his kinsman's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So let it be done unto the man who will not build up his kinsman's house. And his name shall be called in Israel, *House of the Shoe taken off* [i.e., any one might call him "Baresole," without committing a legal offence; his family would be stigmatized as the family of a shoeless or barefooted vagabond,— "shoeless fellow" being equivalent to "miserable fellow," since it was only in extreme penury and misery that the Hebrews went barefoot].

This is the statute to which Boaz is about to appeal; and the one provision of it which still calls for explanation is that symbolic act, the taking off of the shoe. The custom was even thus early a very ancient one, as we are reminded in this Chapter (verse 7), and was observed in all cases of redemption and exchange: in fact, it was the legal form for con-

firming or binding legal or commercial transactions. And this custom had its origin in the fact, that when a man took possession of landed property, he did it by planting his shoe on the soil ; he asserted his right to it by treading on the land he had bought. Thus the shoe symbolized a possession or estate which a man actually held, and which he could tread with his feet at will. Naturally and easily, therefore, the taking off of the shoe and handing it to another came to signify that a man renounced his own legal claim to a possession and transferred it to the neighbour to whom he gave his shoe : with the shoe he gave the right to tread and till the land. This singular custom was not peculiar to the Jews ; it also obtained anciently among the Germans. But among the Hebrews of the earlier times it grew into common use as a symbol of exchange, and was employed as a sign of the transfer of rights of any kind, and not only to denote the transfer of land : in short, it seems to have been as common as signing a deed or handing over a warrant is with us. And if we bear this fact in mind, we often get a new light on even the most familiar passages. Thus, for example, the Prodigal Son, in our Lord's parable, has shoes put on his feet to denote that he is reinstated in the inheritance he had left.

Of course a custom so common was not of itself ignominious. But to the Hebrew there was as wide a difference between taking off his own shoe and having it taken off by another, as there is with us between lifting off one's own hat and having it knocked off by another. And in the case of the kinsman, who refused to do a *goel's* duty by his

brother's widow, the shoe was *taken off*, before the Elders, by the woman whom he had refused to marry. He was thus publicly and ceremoniously branded as one who had broken the law, as having failed in the sacred and imperative duties of kinship, as having preferred his private interests and aims to the welfare of the Commonwealth. And this public disgrace was enhanced by the indignity of being spat upon by the woman he had wronged, and having his whole family saddled with a nickname—"House of the Shoeless," or "Baresole's Kin"—which exposed them to general ridicule and contempt.

This severe law was not enforced by Boaz in all its severity. But, in order to make his own marriage with Ruth lawful and legal, he was obliged to appeal to it, and, in part, to put it in force. His mode of action shews how primitive the time was, how simple the social organization. Obviously there was as yet no king in Israel, no accessible judge even, before whom he might carry his suit. And so, very early in the morning, Boaz hurries from the threshing-floor that he may seat himself in the Gate in time to catch those who, like himself, had slept outside the walls, and will be returning into the city, and those who may leave the city for the fields. He has not long taken his seat before the *goel*, the unnamed kinsman, passes by. Boaz calls on him to sit down,—using a legal form of summons from which his kinsman would understand that he had some legal business to transact with him.

We translate the summons, "*Ho, So-and-so,*" or,

"*Ho, Such-an-one*, turn aside, sit down here." But it is difficult, if not impossible, so to translate the Hebrew form as to convey its full significance. In the Original we have two Hebrew words, *Peloni almoni*, and these two words, apparently, embody one of those legal obliquities of which most ancient systems of law retain some trace; as, for example, in those fictitious personages, John Doe and Richard Roe of the English action for ejectment, who have only recently been abolished, and in the custom which, till a few years since, obtained in the German courts of suing, not in one's own proper name, but in some common and familiar name, such as *Hans*.

The ancient Hebrew form of procedure was of this oblique kind. Instead of summoning even his near kinsman by his personal name, Boaz cried "*Peloni almoni*, turn aside, and sit down,"—the words meaning literally "such" and "nameless;" the effect of using this antique form being, so far as we can now recover it, very much as if he had summoned a certain anonymous person before the Elders instead of giving him his proper name; just as a few years ago certain fictitious personages, John Doe and Richard Roe, might have been, and were, summoned into an English court. What the origin of the form was, whether it denoted that only a *friendly* suit was to be tried, or whether it was intended to cover errors of misdescription, or whether it grew out of the solemn Eastern courtesy which would shrink from naming a man when threatening him with vexation or harm, it is impossible to say: but, in any case, we have here, in this phrase, an old legal fossil, a remnant of a still more

ancient legal form in one of the most ancient systems of jurisprudence.

*Peloni almoni*, in the person of the unnamed kinsman of Boaz, responds to the summons. And now, his legal adversary or respondent being secured, Boaz sits and watches the citizens as they pass in and out, asking now this and now that grave elder to sit down, until he has ten, the legal number, of the best reputed men of Bethlehem to act at once as judges and witnesses of his procedure. In accordance with Oriental custom, many other citizens, seeing these grave elders assembled, and understanding that the wealthy and pious Boaz had some business of grave importance to transact, would add themselves, unbidden yet not unwelcome, to the company, that they too might hear and see what was going on.

Boaz opens the proceedings by formally announcing to his kinsman that Naomi has sold the field, the parcel of land, which formerly belonged to their common kinsman, Elimclech. Naomi may either have sold this land to supply her necessities, though, if that were so, one hardly sees how she should have come to extreme want in the lapse of a single year; or, more probably, she may have sold it for the express purpose of putting the law in motion, and compelling her kinsman to redeem it. In either case the kinsman was legally bound both to redeem the estate and to marry Naomi, or, should she waive her claim or be past child-bearing, to marry Ruth. Each of these two women was a childless widow, and each had a claim on the estate. Should neither of them

have a child, the family of Elimelech would become extinct, "his name would be put out of Israel." Here clearly, then, was a case in which the *goel* was bound to come forward and do his duty. And, indeed, the *goel* of Naomi admits the claim; nay, more, so long as he thinks it is only the redemption of Elimelech's land that is in question, he is willing to satisfy the claim. To the appeal and inquiry of Boaz, "Wilt thou redeem?" he formally replies, "I will redeem it."

Now Boaz had set his heart on marrying Ruth, and therefore he must have heard his kinsman's reply with some dismay. But one resource is left him. His kinsman may not admit that he is bound to marry Ruth, or he may not care to marry her, even if he admit the obligation. And hence Boaz now rejoins, "But, if you redeem the land of Elimelech, you must also take Ruth, the *Moabitess*, to wife, and raise up the name of the dead man on his inheritance. Are you prepared to do this also?" The kinsman is not prepared to assume *this* function of the *goel*. And, in an ordinary case, he would have been in no little embarrassment between his reluctance to marry his kinsman's widow and his fear lest, should he refuse, she should inflict the disgraceful penalty of his refusal upon him. But Boaz has made the way easy for him. He has brought neither Naomi nor Ruth with him, so that his kinsman has no indignity to fear. For the present, at least, his shoe will not be pulled off, nor will the slighted and injured woman spit in his face. And, moreover, Boaz has expressed his perfect willingness to discharge

all the duties of the *goel* should his kinsman decline them. His motive in thus sparing his kinsman is not simply, I suppose, either a kindly consideration for a man closely related to him or his love for Ruth, but also the conviction that an Israelite, caring only for the letter of the law and not for its spirit, might honestly doubt whether he were bound to marry his "brother's" widow *when that widow was a daughter of Moab*. True, Ruth had come to put her trust under the shadow of Jehovah's wings. True, she was known as a good and brave woman in all the city of Bethlehem. But, none the less, she was by birth an alien, one of the heathen women, with whom the sons of Israel were forbidden to intermarry. The law was doubtful: if the appeal to it were pushed too far he might defeat his own end.

We need not think over hardly, therefore, even of this anonymous kinsman. He may have been, probably he was, a just man according to his lights. Walking by the strict requirements of the law of Israel he may have honestly doubted whether he were bound to marry Mahlon's *Moabitish* widow. Undoubtedly it was a sin against Hebrew law for Mahlon to have married her while she was a heathen, even if it were not a sin to take her to wife now that she was a proselyte. Could, then, the widow of an illegal marriage claim quite the same rights with the widow of a legal marriage, even though she afterwards became a proselyte to the Hebrew faith? And if he was not bound to marry her, would it be prudent to marry her? Evidently he thinks it would not be prudent. He declines to

redeem, on such terms, the inheritance of his dead kinsman, "*lest I mar mine own inheritance.*" By which he meant, I think, that his doubt as to the right conferred on Ruth by the Hebrew law was reinforced by a Hebrew superstition. For, in Israel, marriage with the daughter of an alien race was held to be "unlucky," even when it was lawful. Many such marriages had proved unhappy and disastrous. And, by expressly calling Ruth *the Moabitess* in his challenge, Boaz seems to have touched his kinsman's superstitious fears. No doubt, the calamities which had befallen Elimelech and Naomi were popularly attributed to their sojourn in the Field of Moab. No doubt, the popular voice of Bethlehem affirmed that Chilion and Mahlon had been cut off before their time because they had married "strange women." Here, then, was one Hebrew family in imminent danger of extinction solely because of such a marriage as was now proposed. The *goel* fears a similar fate. He fears that, should he marry Ruth, he may "injure his own inheritance,"—fears that he too may die before his time, and his name be put out of Israel. He, therefore, will run no such risk: let Boaz run it, if he will.

This, I believe, was his real reason for refusing to discharge the duty of the *goel*. And it is a curious comment on his narrow selfish ambition that, of this man who was bent on preserving his name and fame, who would run no risk of having his name cut off from the gate of his place, neither Israel nor the world knows even so much as the mere name. He is unnamed in the very Book which recounts his

story ; we know him simply as the “anonymous kinsman :” while Boaz, who had no such selfish ambition, who held that in every nation they who trust God and work righteousness are acceptable with Him, lives for ever on the sacred page, and is enrolled, together with Ruth, in the pedigree of Him whose Name is above every name.

The anonymous kinsman refuses to redeem Ruth and her inheritance ; and, as a symbol and attestation that he cedes all right to the inheritance, he draws off his shoe and hands it to Boaz, transferring to *him* the legal right to plant his foot on the parcel of land left by Elimelech.

With profound and solemn emotion Boaz calls on the Elders, and the circle of bystanders, to observe and remember this legal transfer of rights and duties, expressing himself, however, with legal fulness and precision : ‘Ye are witnesses this day that I have acquired all that was Elimelech’s, and all that was Chilion’s and Mahlon’s, of the hand of Naomi. Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I acquired to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren and from the gate of his place. Ye are witnesses this day.’ They replied : “We are witnesses,”<sup>1</sup>—thus completing the legal transaction,—and break out into a profusion of good wishes which amply verify the statement of Boaz concerning Ruth in the previous Chapter : “All the gate of my people

<sup>1</sup> It is probable that in the appeal of Boaz and the response of the Elders we have another “survival” of an ancient system of jurisprudence.

doth know that thou art a good and brave woman." They lift her to the level of the most famous women of Israel by praying that she may be like Rachel and Leah, the mothers of the twelve tribes. And though the words, "The Lord make the woman that cometh into thy house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel," may probably have already become the usual formula of congratulation and benediction when an Israelitish marriage was announced, yet the fact that this sacred formula was conceded to Ruth *the Moabitess* shews that, at last, the inhabitants of Bethlehem had learned to value her at her true worth. They would not have uttered this prayer if they had not come to esteem her, for her love and piety, as an Israelite indeed.

Boaz, being now the recognized *goel* of Ruth, marries her; and, in due time, a son is given them. And now the shadows, which lay so thick on the opening incidents of the Story, clear off, and both Naomi and Ruth receive a full reward for their rare and heroic love. It is one of the many fine points of the Story that its concluding sentences are almost wholly devoted, not to the young and happy wife and mother, but to Naomi, who had suffered so many calamities, and who, by the piety and resignation with which she bore them, had drawn Ruth from the idolatries of Moab. It is Naomi, not Ruth, whom "the women her neighbours" congratulate on the birth of Ruth's son. In him they see Naomi's *goel* — Ruth already had her's in Boaz; and they pray that, as he grows up, he may restore her to her former happiness and be the stay and gladness of

her old age. But though they speak to Naomi, and pray for her, they do not utterly forget the singular virtue of Ruth. In the words, “Thy daughter-in-law, *who loveth thee; who is better to thee than seven sons,*” they pronounce on her an eulogy such as few “strange” women could have heard from Hebrew lips. It is because the boy is Ruth’s son that he is Naomi’s *goel*; for how can he fail to love and cherish the woman whom his mother has loved with a love even passing that of women?

And so the Story closes, not simply leaving these two brave and noble woman happy in each other, and in Boaz, and in Obed his son, but weaving for them an immortal crown of honour in that it marks their intimate connection with David, the “darling of Israel,” and with Him who was at once David’s Son and Lord. “Boaz begat Obed, and Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David;” and of David, concerning the flesh, came Jesus the Christ, the Light of the Gentiles and the Glory of the people of Israel.

It is not every story of faithful love and piety which mounts to so happy a close, at least in this world. But before we complain, as though our virtue had been passed over by our God, it will be well for us to ask ourselves whether our virtue can compare with that of Ruth. It will also be well for us to remember what Ruth did not know, that godliness has the promise of the life to come as well as of that which now is, and to rest in the conviction that the longer the promise tarries the richer and sweeter will be its fulfilment. Most of us, probably, get quite as much happiness as is good for us even

here, certainly as much as we have deserved; but we may all get a blessedness far larger than we have deserved hereafter, and shall get it, if only we follow those who, through faith and patience, now inherit the promises.

S. COX.

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THE EPISTLES TO  
THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.

II.—SMYRNA. (*Revelation ii. 8-11.*)

THE messages that follow that to the Church of Ephesus stand in one respect in very striking contrast to it. There we are able, through the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of St. Paul, to follow the history of the Christian community from its very birth; to trace the influences that had acted on it; to see in what way the picture brought before us in the Apocalypse was the result of those influences. Here we know nothing of the previous history. But for this mention of the Churches we should not have known that any Christian congregations had been planted there. Knowing that they were so planted, we can at best conjecture that they owed their origin to the evangelizing activity of St. Paul or his associates in the mission-work of the Church during his residence at Ephesus, and that they had become personally known to St. John when he succeeded to the care of the Asiatic Churches.

Nor does it help us here, any more than in the case of Ephesus, to fall back upon the pre-Christian history of Smyrna as a city. That it had been wealthy, populous, commercial, from the remote

period that had preceded the Persian conquest; that it claimed, with other cities (six or seven), to have been the birthplace of Homer; that, after suffering great injury from an earthquake in the early part of the reign of Tiberius, it had risen from its ruins into fresh magnificence; that it courted and gained the favour of that Emperor and his successors,—all this is, for our present purpose, of little moment. It is, perhaps, something more to the point to remember that it was as famous for the worship of Dionysos as Ephesus was for that of Artemis, and that the mysteries and games which were held yearly in his honour were a prominent feature in its life. It followed, almost as a matter of course, from its wealth and trade, that it would attract a considerable Jewish population, and that these would occupy there much the same position as at Ephesus,<sup>1</sup> worshipping in their synagogues, zealous for their faith, some of them welcoming the new doctrine of the preachers of the Cross as the completion of that faith, some of them hating and reviling it even more than they hated the Heathenism by which they were surrounded. In such a city it was natural that the believers in the name of Christ should suffer persecution. It is clear that they had not escaped the storm which swept over the Asiatic Churches at the time of St. Paul's last visit, and which had apparently burst out with fresh violence at the time when the beloved Disciple was suffering for the faith in his

<sup>1</sup> The prominence of the Jews in the history of the martyrdom of Polycarp at a later date shews how numerous they then were (*Mart. Polyc. c. 12, 13, 17*).

exile in Patmos. Possibly its comparative remoteness from the great centre of apostolic activity at Ephesus exposed it more to the excitement of fear and agitation which persecution inevitably brings with it.

To the Angel of that Church accordingly the Lord, who speaks the word in season to them that are weary, reveals Himself by a name that speaks of permanence and calm, of victory over all disturbing forces, victory all the more complete and wonderful because it came after apparent defeat, "These things saith the First and the Last, which was dead and is alive." Those who were struggling, suffering, dying for the faith, were the servants of no party-leader, no founder of a sect, no prophet with a temporary mission, but of One to whom all the æons of the world's history, all wars and revolutions and the rise and fall of kingdoms were but as moments in the eternal silence. They might be tempted to think their cause desperate; they might seem to be fighting against overwhelming odds; death in all the myriad forms which the subtle cruelty of persecution could devise might appear imminent, but He who "was dead and is alive" could give them there also a victory like his own.<sup>1</sup>

Nor were the words that followed less distinctive

<sup>1</sup> I can hardly bring myself to accept Dean Blakesley's suggestion ("Dict. of the Bible," art. "Smyrna"), that the words imply a reference to the mythical legend of the death and reviviscence of Dionysos which, at Smyrna as elsewhere, was prominent in the mysteries that bore his name. That legend must surely have been altogether foreign to the thoughts of the Evangelist and the believers to whom he wrote.

in their consoling power: He knew their "works," their "tribulation," and their "poverty." The last word is specially suggestive as pointing to that which weighed most oppressively on the minds of the suffering community of Smyrna. Persecution has its heroic and exciting side, and under its stimulus men do and dare much; but when, in addition to this, there is the daily pressure of ignoble cares, the living as from hand to mouth, the insufficient food and the scanty squalid clothing of the beggar, the trial becomes more wearing, and calls for greater fortitude and faith. We do not sufficiently estimate, I believe, this element in the sufferings of the first believers. Taken, for the most part, from the humbler class of artizans, often thrown out of employment by the very fact of their conversion, with new claims upon them from the afflicted members of the great family of Christ close at hand, or afar off, and a new energy of sacrifice prompting them to admit those claims, subjected not unfrequently to the "spoiling of their goods," we cannot wonder that they should have had little earthly store, and that their reserve of capital should have been rapidly exhausted. Traces of this meet us, though they are not put forward ostentatiously, in many scattered passages of the New Testament writings. Collections for the poor saints at Jerusalem were made in all the churches of the Gentiles. Those who gave most liberally to that work did so out of the "deep poverty" in which they were themselves plunged, "to the utmost of their power, yea, and beyond their power." (2 Cor. viii. 2, 3.) Even the stress laid in some

of St. Paul's Epistles on the duties of the rich points to their position as altogether exceptional. And poverty brought with it, as the Epistle of St. James shews us, some trials to which those who had been devout Israelites before their conversion, and who had not ceased to claim their position as such, would be peculiarly sensitive. In the synagogue which they had been in the habit of attending, and which there was no reason for their at once forsaking, perhaps even in the assemblies of Jewish disciples which still retained the old name and many of the old usages, they would find themselves scorned and scoffed at, thrust into the background, below the footstool of the opulent traders in which a city like Smyrna was certain to abound. The hatred which the unbelieving Jews felt for the name of Christ would connect itself with their purse-proud scorn of the poor and needy, and "those beggars of Christians" would become a by-word of reproach.

It was a message of comfort to those who were smarting under that taunt to hear, as from their Lord's lips, "I know thy poverty, but thou art rich." He measured poverty and riches by another standard than the world's, and so the words recorded by St. John are, as it were, the echo of those which the brother of the Lord had addressed to men who were in a like condition: "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" (James ii. 5.) And He, looking upon their works and their tribulation, knew that they had their treasure in heaven, that they were rich with his own un-

searchable riches, that they had laid up their wealth where neither rust nor moth corrupt and where thieves do not break through and steal. Their state was the very antithesis of that which we shall afterwards find described as that of the Church of Laodicea, and in that deep poverty of theirs they were wealthy; beyond the dream of avarice, in the “gold tried in the fire.”

The stress thus laid on one special incident of the tribulation of the church of Smyrna prepares us to understand the words that follow. I take the blasphemy of which they speak as coming from “those who said they were Jews and were not,” as meaning, primarily, not direct blasphemy against God, but the words of reviling which were hurled in reckless scorn at the believers in the name of Christ. It was in the synagogue that they heard the words which reproached them as Nazarenes, Galileans, Christians, disciples of the Crucified ; and, as in the case of those of whom St. James writes, those who despised the poor, and whose contempt was aggravated by the fact that these poor were Christians, in reviling them “blasphemed also that worthy name” by which they had been called (James ii. 7). Upon all such, whether they were Jews continuing still in their unbelief, or, as is possible, professing some kind of faith in Christ, yet retaining all the vices of their original Pharisaism, the Lord of the Churches pronounces the sentence that they are no true Jews, that they do not belong to the Israel of God, that the synagogue of which they are the members is nothing else than the synagogue of Satan. His spirit was working in them, the spirit of pride and

hatred, and scorn, and unbelief, and it was well that they, who knew not what manner of spirit they were of, should have their eyes opened to the perils of their true state.

And then there came words which at once told them that they had to face evils that were greater than any they had as yet experienced, and enabled them to bear them. The storm was not yet over. They had but heard its mutterings and seen its distant flashes as compared with the violence with which it was about to break on them. “The devil”—for the antagonism to the Truth is traced up here, as elsewhere, beyond all merely human instruments, to the great enemy of God and man, the great accuser and slanderer, the head of all the human *διάβολοι* who made themselves instruments in his work—would “cast some of them into prison,” and from that prison some of them should pass out to encounter death in all the manifold forms which the cruelty of their persecutors could devise. They were to be tried with this fiery trial that the gold of their true treasure might be at once tested and purified. That which was designed by their great foe as a temptation leading them to apostasy should work, like all the other “manifold temptations” to which they were exposed, so as to be fruitful in all joy.

The specific mention of the “ten days” during which the tribulation was to last has naturally suggested many questions. Are the days to be taken literally, and has the prediction therefore the character of a promise, encouraging the sufferers to stedfastness on the ground of the short duration of the trial? Are we to adopt what has almost come

to be assumed as an axiom to the interpretation of other parts of the Apocalypse, that a day stands for a year, and that the words point therefore to the persecution as at once severe and protracted, and calling for the faith which alone endureth to the end? Without adopting, or even for the present discussing, the "year-day" theory, I am disposed to adopt the latter view in its general bearings. The number Ten, the last of the scale of units, the total of the first four units, each of which had a mystic meaning of its own, is naturally, in the symbolism of numbers, the representative of completeness, and here, therefore, of persecution carried to its full extent, and lacking nothing that could make it thorough and perfect as a test.<sup>1</sup> It comes as the climax of the whole picture of the sufferings to which the Church of Smyrna was to be exposed. It implies the "death" which is prominently brought forward in the words of promise that follow. In those words we may perhaps find something of a local colouring, imagery drawn from the associations that were necessarily familiar to the Church of Smyrna and its Angel. In the great games of that city, as in the Isthmian games and those of Olympia, the victor in the strife received the "crown," or "garland" (*στέφανος*) that was the barge of conquest.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The usage of the Old Testament is not consistent. In Gen. xxxi. 41, Num. xiv. 24, Job xix. 3, the definite number is used to convey the idea of indefinitely frequent repetition. In Gen. xxiv. 58 Num. xi. 19, it is used, apparently, in its literal sense. The interpretation now given is based upon Bähr, "Symbolik," ii. 2, § 8.

<sup>2</sup> Canon Blakesley states, in the article already referred to, but without giving his authority, that the "crown" was given to the priest who presided at the Dionysian mysteries, and that Smyrnean inscriptions record the names of many persons, men and women, distinguished

For that crown men were ready to endure and dare. It was the great joy and glory of their lives. And such a crown of victory the Lord of the Churches promises to him who is faithful unto death. It is to be "a crown of life," the genitive (as in the case of the "crown of righteousness" of 2 Tim. iv. 8) pointing to that of which the crown is, as it were, made up. Life, eternal life, is that which makes the reward of all faithful combatants, and that eternal life consists in knowing God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Now, as ever, He is Himself the exceeding great reward of those who serve Him truly.

The promise with which the message ends, though different and more general, as well as more mystical in its form, expresses substantially the same truth : "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." The word, so strange and awful, was, so far as we know, comparatively new. Nothing like it meets us in the Gospels, or in the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Paul. And, although we must believe that it had been used before in the teaching of St. John, so that it would not fall on ears to which it would convey no intelligible meaning, it is yet clear that it had not up to this time become part of the

as *στεφανηφόροι*. I cannot see any force in the objection urged by Archbishop Trench to this reference, that comparisons drawn from the games of Greece were foreign to the thoughts both of the writer and the readers of the Apocalypse, and that the crowns referred to are therefore the signs, not of victory in conflict, but, like the *διαδήματα* of Rev. xii. 3; xiii. 1; xix. 12, of regal majesty. The Asiatic Churches must have been familiar by this time with the imagery which had been so freely used both by St. Paul and the great unknown writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews ; and the fact that St. John uses the other word where the other meaning is required is, at least, presumptive evidence that he uses this in its usual and more definite meaning.

current phraseology of the Church.<sup>1</sup> Yet the meaning of the phrase was not far to seek. One who had learnt that the life of the body was not the true life, must have learnt, as the complement of that truth, that there was a death more terrible than that to which the body was subject, the loss of the eternal life. The teaching of his Lord on earth had indeed implied that "second death." Men were not to fear those who were only able to kill the body, but Him who was able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Matt. x. 28). Whosoever believed in Him should not see death, even though his body was committed to the grave; "though he were dead, yet should he live" (John xi. 25). More striking still, as bringing more fully into view the latent terrors of the phrase, is its recurrence in a later chapter of the Revelation. There it is said that the "second death" hath no power over the blessed and holy ones who have part in the first resurrection (xx. 6); and, again, that it is identical with "the lake of fire," into which both Death and Hades are to be cast, together with every one who was not found written in the book of life (xx. 14, 15).

Neither the scope of these papers, nor the limits assigned to them, permit me to enter into the wide eschatological questions which these passages open as regards the time and sequence of the events

<sup>1</sup> The date of the several portions of the Jerusalem Targum, to which Archbishop Trench refers as shewing that the word was not strange to Jewish ears, cannot, I believe, be fixed with precision; but it is at least possible that the Jews of Palestine had become familiar with the phrase through the paraphrase given of it in Deut. xxxiii. 6, and Psa. xlix. 11, in which the "second death" is that which comes upon the wicked in the world to come, and is used as synonymous with Gehenna.

thus mysteriously shadowed forth. We are compelled, however, to ask what light they throw upon the promise to the Angel of the Church of Smyrna. Is the "second death" to be interpreted by "the lake of fire" as implying a state of enduring pain? Are we to rob the lake of fire of its terrors by seeing in it only the "second death," of the loss of conscious life or utter annihilation? Here also we stand on the threshold of great problems which we cannot solve. But, as a question of simple interpretation, I am bound to express my conviction, that the evidence leads to the former, and not the latter, conclusion. The imagery of the fiery lake, like that of the worm and the flame of the Valley of Hinnom, may be but imagery; but it points at least to some dread reality which is veiled beneath those awful symbols. What that reality is we may infer from St. John's conceptions of the higher life. If the first death is the loss of the first or earthly life, then the second death must be the loss of that knowledge of God which makes the blessedness of eternal life—and that loss is at least compatible with the thought of continuous existence. What possibilities in the far-off future were shadowed forth by the mysterious words that "Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire," as though they were to be robbed of their power to destroy, and were punished as the great enemies of God and man, how far those who were cast in with them might even there be not shut out from hope, it was not given to the seer of the Apocalypse to know, nor did he care to ask. It was enough for the faithful sufferers under persecution, who overcame in that

conflict with the “plurima mortis imago,” to which they were exposed, to know that this was all that their enemies could inflict on them, and that the “second death” should have no power to hurt them.

The date to which I have assigned the Apocalypse, and which gave a special interest to the message to the Church of Ephesus, as being probably addressed to the true son and fellow-worker of St. Paul, deprives me of what would have given an almost equal interest to that now under consideration. I cannot assume with Archbishop Trench and others; whatever latitude I may give to the duration of his life or the date of his conversion, that Polycarp, who suffered martyrdom in A.D. 168, could have been the Angel of the Church of Smyrna at the time when the Apocalypse was written. And yet the coincidences which these writers have pointed out are hardly less interesting on the assumption that though the message was not addressed to him, his life, as a Christian and a pastor, came, more or less, under its influence. In his long conflict for the faith — his stedfast endurance — his estimate of the fire with which men could destroy the body, and the fire that never can be quenched,<sup>1</sup> we find a character on which the promise to him that overcometh had been stamped indelibly. In the narrative of his sufferings, as in the Apocalyptic message, the devil is represented as the great instigator of the persecution of which he was the victim.<sup>2</sup> There also Jews were the most active instruments, as was their manner always, in the fiendish work, even to the point of

<sup>1</sup> Mart. Polyc. c. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. c. 3.

heaping up the faggots which were to form his funeral pyre.<sup>1</sup>

It is perhaps worth noticing, as shewing the continuance in the Church of Smyrna of the same phraseology as that in the passage before us, that, in the Epistle which purports to be addressed to Polycarp by Ignatius of Antioch, the term "synagogue" is applied to Christian assemblies, and that the narrative of the martyrdom ends with describing him as having obtained the crown ( $\sigmaτέφανος$ ) of incorruption. E. H. PLUMPTRE.

### THE PROLOGUE OF ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL.

#### III.—THE TRUTH AND IMPORTANCE OF THE CONCEPTION OF THE PERSON OF JESUS CONTAINED IN THE PROLOGUE (*concluded*).

IT was necessary, first of all, that He should lay aside all the attributes which constituted his Divine condition; and we have already seen that the text of Scripture teaches this renunciation both directly and indirectly. Next, it was necessary that the Divine Subject should consent to lose for a time the consciousness of Himself as such. The consciousness of such a peculiar relation to God, and the recollection of a life anterior to this earthly existence, would be incompatible with the condition of a true child and with a really human development. Now, the Gospel narratives nowhere attribute to Jesus, until his baptism, the consciousness of Himself as Logos. The saying which he uttered when

<sup>3</sup> Mart. Polyc. c. 12, 13.

He was twelve years old contains indeed the conviction of a close relationship to God and of a special vocation to labour in his service. But with a moral fidelity like his, and imbued with a feeling of nearness to God which nothing could alter, the Child could call God his Father in a purely religious sense, and without its following that He could from that moment call Himself his Son, still less *the* Son. Besides, for all we know, his mother may have disclosed to Him some of the miraculous circumstances of his birth. Who can measure the amount of confidence with which such a Child would inspire his mother? On the supposition that she had done so, the expression "*My Father*" would be still more easily explained, apart from any necessity of supposing that the Child had attained the consciousness that He was the Logos. As to the conviction of his mission, it might be developed at that age, from the contrast continually presented to his mind between his own holiness and the sin which He saw in every one about Him, not excepting Mary and Joseph. Being the only healthy person in the caravan of sick people with which he was travelling, his heart, filled with charity, must early have taught Him his vocation as a physician.

The Gospel history, however, does not mention a single word or fact which attributes to the child Jesus any consciousness of his Divine nature and previous existence. It is in the apocryphal Gospels that we must look for this unnatural and anti-human Jesus. According to Scripture, the Logos renounced both the state and consciousness of his Divine existence. These were the negative con-

ditions of the Incarnation. The following are its positive conditions, and it suffices to compare with them the known facts of the Gospel history to judge whether they have been fulfilled.

1. Man being a creature conscious of himself and endowed with moral responsibility, the Logos, in descending to the level of man, had to humble Himself to the condition of such a free and intelligent personality as we all possess. This personality, in the consciousness which it had of itself, did not feel itself the Logos, but that truly human being who, under the name of Jesus, was developing there before the eyes of all.

2. Man being created in the image of God, and the principal feature of this image being aspiration after God,—receptivity for the Divine, this was necessarily the prominent feature in the human development of the Logos. Aspiration after God, religious receptivity in its highest degree of energy, constituted the proper characteristic of his being.

3. In consequence of the preponderance in us all of the character of the individual over that of the race, our measure of receptivity for the Divine is limited. But if in the Logos made flesh there is realized a second time, and to a much higher degree than in the first Adam, the idea of the race as such, the religious capacity of all will for this very reason be found concentrated in Him alone. He will thus be able to receive from on high, not only what the best endowed man, but what the entire human race, may be able to receive of God. This religious receptivity, which forms the essence of human nature, He will possess perfectly and without measure.

4. As humanity appears to have been destined from the first to be elevated to the Divine condition, and as the true man, in the Divine idea, is the *God-man*—Satan is well aware of this, and it is from this Divine predestination that he has derived, and will derive to the end, his most dangerous snares—the dominant aim in the life of the Logos made flesh will be to realize, in Himself first of all, this elevation of humanity to the Divine condition, and, then, by reproducing his being in us, to make us sharers in it also. The accomplishment of this task will be, as far as concerns Himself, and subsequent to the recognition of Himself as the Logos, *the recovery of his own glory*; while in respect to us, it will be the realization of the eternal *gift* which the Father has made of us to Him.

5. Lastly, would it be to pass beyond the limits assigned to the human understanding to ask whether this collective receptivity of humanity for the Divine, of which the Logos, having become man, is the perfect organ, is not substantially identical with the receptivity of the Logos Himself relatively to God? ( $\eta\pi\pi\sigma\tau\alpha\Omega\epsilon\sigma\nu$ , v. 1.) We are the work of the Logos, and bear his image. What the Logos is relatively to God in a Divine form, is not man this in time and in a finite form—the free organ of God? Under such conditions, the entrance of a Divine subject into the human state, and its development therein, no longer presents anything contradictory. It only remains to describe the phases of its existence as well as the mode and stages of its restoration to the Divine state.

By such a birth humanity finds itself restored to

its original starting-point; it is in a condition to begin afresh its normal development, which had been interrupted by sin. Up to the age of thirty Jesus accomplishes the moral and religious task of primitive humanity, the task namely of complete obedience and self-sacrifice inspired by a growing love for God and men. As yet He does not know Himself; perhaps, however, by the light of the Scriptures He begins to have a presentiment as to who He is. But the distinct consciousness of his supreme dignity as Logos would be incompatible with the reality of his human development and the accomplishment of the task assigned to this early period of his life.

This task having been fulfilled, the conditions change. A new development opens before Him, and the consciousness of his dignity as Logos, so far from being incompatible with this new phase, that of his ministry, becomes its indispensable basis. In order to testify concerning Himself He must know who He is. To reveal the Father, He must know God is the Father and feel Himself Son. If He is to manifest his glory, He must possess the secret of it.

The baptism is the critical event which separates this new phase from the preceding.<sup>1</sup> Meeting the aspirations and presentiments of the heart of Jesus, the Father says to Him, "*Thou art my Son*," and thus witnesses to his spirit of those unique eternal

<sup>1</sup> Since the Gnostics falsified the meaning of the baptism by making it the epoch of the descent of the Divine Æon into the man Jesus, M. de Ringement is the first who has ventured to give to this event all its value in the personal development of the Lord. (See "Christ et ses Témoins," t. i. pp. 229-296; particularly pp. 250-255.)

ties which bound Him to Himself. From that moment Jesus knew Himself as the absolute object of the Divine delight. He could say what He could not have said before, "*Before Abraham was, I am.*" He possessed this consciousness of Sonship as the ground-plan of all subsequent manifestations, the reward of his previous fidelity, the revelation of his eternal essence. At the same time *heaven was opened* to Him, that is to say, his eye fathomed the depths of the Divine plans, and he had a perfect knowledge of whatever was necessary for the accomplishment of his Messianic work. From that moment He could say, "*We testify that which we have seen.*" Lastly, humanity was raised in Him to a supernatural or spiritual life which had never appeared before, because it had never found a worthy and efficient organ on the earth; *the Holy Spirit descended.* And, for the service of propagating this higher life, He felt Himself master of all things.

Whilst, however, the baptism restored to Jesus the consciousness of his Sonship, it did not restore Him to his Divine *condition*, his *form of God*. He had command, as the beloved Son, of all the treasures of wisdom and power that are hid in God, the assurance of his filial dignity giving Him access to them; but He possessed nothing as his own, therefore He could still say, "*Father, give me my glory.*"

It was by the ascension that his assumption of the Divine condition was accomplished, and his position raised to the level of the consciousness which He had of Himself from the time of his

baptism. From that moment He became possessed, and as Son of Man too, of all the Divine attributes, of the condition belonging to the Son of God, just as He possessed it previous to his incarnation; *in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead* BODILY (Col. ii. 9). And ten days after He had been received up into Divine glory He began, by Pentecost, that glorification of the Church which will be perfected by his Parousia.

Thus we behold God's plan concentrated in the person of Jesus. The first word of history, "*Ye shall be as gods,*" will also be the last. Created in the image of the Logos, the end of our development

the possession of his glory. We have only to place ourselves relatively to Him in that same state of receptivity in which He has kept Himself relatively to the Father (vi. 57), and his will will be accomplished. "*Where he is, there we shall be with him*" (xvii. 24).

We cannot see in what way this conception of the Incarnation infringes on the true humanity of the Lord. Man is a vessel designed for the reception of God, but in successive measures and by a free advancement. He is a vessel which enlarges as it fills, and which must be filled as it enlarges. The Logos is also the vessel of Divinity, put eternally equal thereto and completely full. In accordance with this affinity and this difference between the Logos and man, this is what appears to us to be the formula of the Incarnation, as drawn from the whole Gospel of John: THE LOGOS REALIZED IN JESUS, IN THE FORM OF HUMAN EXISTENCE AND SUBJECT TO THE LAW OF DEVELOPMENT

AND PROGRESS, THAT RELATION OF DEPENDENCE AND FILIAL COMMUNION WHICH HE REALIZED IN HEAVEN IN THE IMMUTABLE FORM OF THE DIVINE LIFE.

We have dealt with the question of the relations of the Logos to humanity. We have yet to glance at the relation of the Logos to God Himself.

What was the form of existence of the Logos before his Incarnation, and how is the nature of such a being to be conceived of? St. Paul calls Him the *image* of the invisible God, and St. John designates Him the *Word*. These two expressions contain primarily the idea of an internal revelation taking place within the depths of the Divine essence. God affirms, with an eternal affirmation, all that He thinks, wills, loves; this is possible, because He is eternally conscious of Himself. This affirmation is at once his absolute word and his perfect image. And this word is not a *verbum volans*; it is a living personal being, who—if we may apply to God an expression which is only appropriate to man—might be called *his realized ideal*. Let us imagine what the masterpiece of an artist, in which he had embodied the full wealth of his genius, would be to him were it to become alive, conscious of itself, and capable of entering into personal relations with its author; such in God, and for God, is the Word. This Word cannot but be Divine; for the highest affirmation of God cannot be other than God Himself, God being unable to think, will, or love anything higher than God. Such, we conceive, is the true meaning of the term Word. Before signifying *God revealed*, this word signifies *God affirmed*. The Word is in God the *Word spoken*.

before being the *Word speaking*. This is why the Prologue describes the Word first of all as turned towards God, and only afterwards in his relations with the world. The first direction constitutes his essence: the second is an act of grace in Him. The term Son belongs entirely to the sphere of his relation with God, and only concerns us because the gift of the Son demonstrates the boundless nature of the Divine love for mankind. The term Word is more general. It embraces the eternal relation of this Being with God as well as his relation with the world in time. And this undoubtedly is the reason why from the very first John made use in the Prologue of the name Word, and introduced the title Son only subsidiarily and in place of it.

This God affirmed is unique as well as the God affirming. He is the *only (unique) Son*. The Word is the absolute *enunciation (énoncé)* of God, his sole *utterance (dire)*, his unique primordial edict in which are contained all his particular edicts. Every subsequent word which shall be realized in time is contained in this unique Word, and will never subsist but in Him: ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκε τὰ πάντα says St. Paul (Col. i. 17). In giving eternal utterance to this Word, that is to say, in begetting this Being, God speaks all his Being, and this Word in his turn will speak all other beings. They will all be his free affirmation, as He is God's. The Word manifests in time, by means of creation, all the Divine riches which in the eternal order God included in Him. *Creation is a poem by the Word to the glory of the Father.* This notion of the Word as the

creative principle is, as Lange<sup>1</sup> has admirably shewn, of the greatest importance for the conception of the universe. Blind and eternal matter, fatal necessity, find no place in a view at the basis of which is placed the Word. The creative Word is the pledge of the ideal and luminous essence of the world made visible in its inward substance, and in all the relations of the beings composing it.<sup>2</sup>

From the supreme dignity of Christ results the capital importance of his appearing upon the stage of the world. If He is the Word made flesh, He is also the manifestation and absolute communication of God, eternity come down into time, man's highest blessings, Divine grace and truth put within the reach of his faith. After such a gift from the Father, there is nothing better to expect. For mankind there remains only one alternative: to take it and live, or to reject it and perish.

If, on the contrary, this supreme dignity of Jesus be denied, his appearing has only a relative value, and Christianity is only "one of the days of human-

<sup>1</sup> "Leben Jesus," t. iv. pp. 553-556.

<sup>2</sup> We do not think that we have to concern ourselves here with the questions as to the internal relations of the Divine Being which are suggested by the view we have just given of the dogma of the Incarnation. Since in our judgment the Divine existence of the Son belongs to the sphere of love (*the bosom of the Father*), and not of metaphysical necessity, as in Philo, we think that when the Word descends into the world and becomes one of the beings of this universe, the Father can enter into direct relations with the world, and exercise in it Himself the functions of creator and preserver, which He ordinarily exercises through the mediation of the Word. We do not forget that, if the Word has life in Himself and communicates it to the world, it is because the Father has *given* it Him and that thus all proceeds from the Father (John v. 26). We have kept in this exposition within the limits of positive revelation, and have only sought to shew the admirable harmony of the facts contained in it.

ity."<sup>1</sup> Excellent as the author of this religion may be, mankind may, and must, always "look for another." For the path of progress has no limit. The door is open to the first comer; and the prediction of Jesus has only to find another fulfilment: "*I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another come in his own name, him ye will receive.*" (John v. 43.)

For the Church therefore this is a vital question. John, who lived in the midst of those first conflicts which were the prelude to the last, perfectly understood this. He had therefore his reasons for placing this Prologue in the fore-front of his Gospel. In order that faith may be faith, it must be absolute, without any after-thought, without admitting even the possibility of contradiction, and to be this, its object must be perfect; as an object of knowledge as well as of life, it must be what can never be surpassed. Such is the practical bearing of the Prologue of John, and such its intimate connection with the subsequent narrative.

F. GODET.

### THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

#### CHAPTER III. VERSES 1-7.

THE Apostle now diverges to another department of practical Christian ethics, and describes the moral and social characteristics of the officers of the Christian Church. He lays down no law of ecclesiastical organization. He does not review the

<sup>1</sup> Lermineur.

origin or significance of these offices. He does not even determine the mode of the appointment or consecration of church officers. All the information we can obtain on these subjects is purely incidental. The functions of the bishop and deacon are apparently well understood between Paul and his correspondent. I will not discuss from this passage the question of the identity of the office of elder and bishop. The most learned modern scholars, and the most accomplished advocates of the apostolic origin of the episcopal rank, concede the identity, while they suppose that the position of Timothy and Titus mediated between the supreme authority of the Apostles and the office of the pastor, elder, or bishop; that, as a matter of fact, the *episcopos* of the second century was the representative of the hyper-presbyterial dignity of Timothy and that the transference of the name bishop to such an officer was an accidental circumstance. Whether traces of such official hyper-presbyterial rank can be found at any time that can secure for it apostolic approval is a grave and difficult question, which I must not presume to discuss here. The *episcopos* of the Ignatian Epistles may indeed have easily arisen as a "development" from the presbyterial college of earlier days. The "bishop" may have merely confirmed the existence of certain tendencies in human society by which the stronger will and the broader experience of *one* triumphs over the smaller faculties of the *many*. A lamentable disposition in our nature to hand over to another solemn duties which are really laid by God on every one of us has led, under all dispensations, to priest-

craft, and the Christian Church may not have been exempt from the disposition. Granting this, it is easy to understand the growth of episcopal power; but such an explanation is quite insufficient to justify the pretensions of those who limit the Church of God to episcopally-officered communities. In the close of Paul's ministry it had already become *a faithful saying*, a well-known and trustworthy remark, one which covered much ecclesiastical history, and suggests many conjectures, that *if any one seeks* (stretches out the hand to secure) *the office of a bishop* (pastor, elder, or overseer), *he desires a good work*. The classical usage of the word *θέλεται* implies the eagerness with which such a desire is manifested. The chief point to observe is, that Paul admits the office to be a beautiful, honourable, noble position, involving "*work*" for God and men.

*Verse 2.—It is then,—i.e., if the saying be a trustworthy one—needful that a bishop (i.e., every bishop) should be irreproachable*, one who is not blamed and not blameable. The office should never be used as the means of purging away stains upon character.

The next clause has provoked much dispute, Paul says a bishop should be *the husband of one wife*. The *δεῖ* does not carry imperative force, so that an *un-married* man should not be allowed to occupy episcopal and pastoral functions. This would certainly be inconsistent with 1 Cor. vii. 7, 32, 33; ix. 5. Ambrose interpreted the passage to mean that a bishop should not be a pluralist, or be changing from one see to another. Many of the Fathers have seen in it a condemnation of second marriages.

The Greek Church has throughout permitted a single nuptial, but regarded a repetition of the marriage relation as a disqualification for the episcopate. Very early in Christian literature, as in "The Shepherd" of Hermas, ii. 4, Tertullian, "De Monogamia," second marriages are condemned as displeasing to the Lord, and supposed to be unsuited to the pastoral functions. This is held by Cornelius-a-Lapide, Heydenreich, Leo, Ellicott, and Alford, to be Paul's injunction. It seems, however, that there is no stigma whatever in the Roman, Greek, or Hebrew legislation on second nuptials, and in this very Epistle Paul advises the second marriage of the younger widows. The great Greek interpreters, Chrysostom and Theophylact, give a wider significance to the clause; and the false asceticism involved in the reproach thus passed on a second marriage is inconsistent with the whole spirit of Paul and of the New Testament. Surely the Apostle is here condemning all illicit relations of the sexes, and confining the bishop to one wife at a time. It is certain that the great moralists of Greece and Rome opposed polygamy, but the greatest looseness prevailed. Divorce and concubinage were too common to render such a stringent law as this unnecessary.<sup>1</sup> The significance of the advice to pastors is, that in all relations with woman they preserve the most painstaking and scrupulous purity, an inward and absolute modesty of thought and desire. More than this, the bishop is to be *sober*. The word implies more and other than "total absti-

<sup>1</sup> See a long and very careful Appendix on this subject in Fairbairn's "Commentary."

nence" from wine; it means self-restraint in all things, having, as Chrysostom puts it, ten thousand eyes, looking, watching everywhere. It urges temperance in pleasures of all kinds. This is sustained by two grand words, *σώφρονα, κόσμιον*. He must be, or should be, *sound-minded* and *discreet*. The latter word refers to all the outer seeming. "A man," says the Son of Sirach, "may be known by his look, and one that hath understanding by his countenance. A man's attire and excessive laughter and gait shew what he is." *A lover of strangers* was a characteristic of vast importance in the early Church, and it is not valueless now. A pastor is here taught to consider it his function to be kind and unsuspicious to strangers. It is better to be occasionally deceived by a rogue than to harden one's heart against suffering goodness.

The word *διδακτικόν*—*apt to teach*—is peculiar to these Epistles; but is easy to translate. Not only should a bishop or pastor be able, but ready to teach. Some are *ready*, but are not *able*, to impart any knowledge. There are others who are able to teach, but are *not ready*, and who shirk their solemn responsibilities to God's Church. The word seems to urge the immense importance of "sanctified common sense" and of the power of instructing others by public speech.

It is important to remember that teaching power may be clearly discriminated from prophetic fire, from burning eloquence and from conspicuous originality. It is, moreover, of more importance to a pastor than are these great gifts without it.

*Verse 3. Πάροινος* is violent manifestation at ban-

quets, the result rather than the fact of drunkenness. Against the riot of the feast the pastor is warned; and, moreover, he is to be *no striker*. There are presbyters who seem on the look-out for tender consciences that they can shock, for little irritabilities that they can vex, for abuses that they can expose, for mistakes which they can hold up to reprobation, for peccadillos which they can harshly criticize. There are good men and true who are perhaps too ready to give an "honest word," "some candid advice," or a "little of their mind," to any casual friend. They can "strike" with fist and sledge-hammer, and "stone men with hard words till they die."

It is singular that some of the later MSS. and the Received Text should have here inserted, "not greedy of base gain;" but the clause disturbs the order of the thought, and the idea is involved in ἀφιλάργυρον, which is introduced later on.

Not only is the bishop to be *no striker*, but he is to be characterized with what has been felicitously translated by Mr. Matthew Arnold as "*sweet reasonableness*." *Επιεικής* is a readiness to treat others, *ὡς εἰκός*, "as it is fitting." It is the moderation of justice, by tender sympathy with weakness. It is a justice which does not look merely at acts, but also at motives, temptations, and extenuating circumstances. This moderating sweetness of soul is the basis of the "*uncontentiousness*," which is here recommended.

Freedom from the *love of money* is then declared to be characteristic of the worthy pastor. The word used is discriminated from covetousness. It repre-

sents a love of that which a man has, as distinct from the strenuous and unscrupulous desire to possess more. Love of the means of securing temporal and secular advantage has wrought untold havoc in the Church.

In *Verse 4* Paul recognizes the family life of the bishop of the Church, and regards the wise management of his own household as a good test of his fitness to preside over larger and more sacred interests. He must *rule well his own house, having his children in subjection with decorum.* The word *σεμνότης* is applicable to the young as well as to the old; though it preserves fundamentally and frequently the meaning of “venerable,” or “worthy of reverence.” And, verily, dignity is an appanage of child-like innocence; reverence is due to chastity, and the sanctity of the kingdom of heaven waits around the little children, who are rightly spoken of as *σέμινα*. The child-life of the pastor’s home should suggest the sacredness of a temple and the order of a palace.

*Verse 5.—For if he knows not how to rule his own house, how shall he take the charge of the Church of God?* The kind of rule which a bishop is to exercise over the church does not resemble that of a king, but that of a father. A footing of perfect equality with the members of his household was not contemplated. Government of some kind by competent hands is indispensable; and hence the further advice, *Verse 6*, that the ruler should not be *a young convert*, a neophyte (*νεόφυτον*), a recently convinced or baptized person, newly planted in the vineyard of God. This suggestion offers a note of warning to

those who hurry the enthusiastic convert into positions where experience of life and much practical self-culture and knowledge of men are at least of equal value with the warm heart and the ready tongue. The reason is, *lest*, stupefied, beclouded, *puffed up with pride*, such an one *fall into the judgment of the devil*. The "judgment" here spoken of refers to the Divine condemnation passed upon the devil. The condemnation or commination *by* the devil (though a possible translation) would be a ground of praise rather than blame. The *κρίμα* is elsewhere referred to God, and has "the genitive of the object" as its appropriate regimen. I conclude, with Meyer, Ellicott, Bengel, and others, that the special fault and awful doom of the devil himself are here thought to be impending over a neophyte tempted by office to spiritual pride.

*Verse 7.*—A positive characteristic is now referred to; the bishop *should, on the other hand, have a good report or reputation among those who are without the Christian Church*. The world, which is a poor judge of doctrine and hopelessly misunderstands the mysteries of the faith, miscalculates motives, and cannot estimate the real weight of religious thought and hope, often judges most accurately of character. That candidate for spiritual functions should be preferred whom non-christian society extols as honest, sincere, pure, and manly. *Lest*, continues the Apostle, *he fall into reproach, and into the snare of the devil*. If the two words, "reproach" and "snare," both refer to the devil, as some have argued, we should once more have the difficulty that the reproachful accusations of the devil

are marks of moral excellence rather than signs of weakness. The devil does not reproach or persecute a man of loose character. Thanks be to God, the reproach of the world does overtake the hypocrite, and help the Church to unmask him. "The snare of the devil," the pit digged for the wicked, the ultimate confusion of falseness, impurity, and selfishness await those who have mistaken their calling.

The Apostle speaks here of no tremendous mysteries which the bishop has to celebrate, no keys of the kingdom of heaven with which he is entrusted, no remission of sins, no absolving function. Sacrificial services, sacramental rites, sacerdotal dignities, are not hinted at, nor is a word said of the power of conferring on others the authority entrusted to himself. Moral characteristics are of prime importance, and "the good report of those who are without" is of more moment than the mere fact of any ecclesiastical appointment. This is very suggestive. If we compare this mode of treatment with the genuine and spurious literature of the second century, we discover new support of the authenticity of the Epistles and fresh testimony to the simplicity of the apostolic constitutions.      H. R. REYNOLDS.

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# THE EXPOSITOR.

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*THE IDEAL INCARNATION.*

REVELATION XII. 10.

To most readers of the Bible the Book of the Revelation does not reveal much. Its visions and burdens are as obscure to them as were those of the Hebrew seers to the Jews. But this mysterious Book is studded with brief ascriptions of praise to God, or to Christ, which, like that before us, at once commend themselves to their hearts. And it lends new beauty to these tiny psalms to know we have some reason for believing that St. John took them from the liturgy of the primitive Church, and that the Church derived them from the lips of the New Testament prophets.

*“Now is come the salvation, and the strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ,”* may very well have been a song in the service of the early Church; there is a liturgical roll and swell in it, as there is in all the songs of praise contained in the Apocalypse, of which the sensitive reader becomes instantly aware. “But,” it may be objected, “St. John tells us that he heard it in heaven!” True; but what is any inspired psalm save a song of heaven sent down to earth? And if *we* love the

psalms and hymns we learned in childhood, may not our friends up yonder still sing the songs they loved on earth? may not the Apostle have heard in the heavenly temple a psalm to which he had often listened in church?

The Book of the Revelation does not reveal much to most of us: but is the fault in the Book or in us? Surely it is in us; for how few of us have really studied it! We have glanced over it now and then perhaps; but, because it has not at once yielded up its secrets to us, we have closed it again, and pronounced it an impenetrable mystery. Possibly we have even treated this inspired writing with the immodesty, the impertinence, we often shew to any fine work of human art. A man of far higher gifts and wider culture than ourselves has compressed the thought and emotion of a lifetime into some noble picture or stately symphony. We look at his picture, or we listen to his symphony, and because we cannot take in—as how should we?—in a few moments what has occupied him for months or years, we say, “There is nothing in it. ‘Tis a poor picture. Dull heavy music!” *That* is the very spirit in which we often deal with St. John. He comes to us with his book of pictures, pictures of the heavenly kingdom—the spiritual world of which we know so little, but of which we need to know so much. He offers us the dreams, visions, inspirations of the long solitary years during which he was an exile in the isle called Patmos; we glance hurriedly at scene after scene, picture after picture, and, because we do not at once recognize their true meaning and beauty, we push them aside as of no worth, at least to us.

Yet they are of the greatest worth. For his Book contains the story of the world as seen from heaven. It is the history of the conflict and development of the great moral and spiritual forces by which the human race is being recovered to the image and service of God. And it is mainly because we do not recognize the sublime design of the Book, it is because the gypsies of the Church have set us to hunt in it for dates and omens, for hints on the political events of the passing day and portents of the immediate future, that we have too hastily concluded the Book to have no message and no charm for us. If we would read it with intelligence, and come to love it, we must steadily bear in mind that the Christian prophecies, like the Hebrew prophecies, have many successive fulfilments, each larger than that which went before it; and that, still like the Hebrew prophecies, their chief value lies, not in their historical and still less in their predictive element, but in their moral element—in the fact that they shed the light of Heaven on the events of earth, and bring Divine laws and principles into the life of men and nations.

Let us take an illustration from the scene of which this verse forms part. St. John sees a wonder in heaven. A woman, clothed with the sun, brings forth a man-child, which a dragon seeks to devour. The child is caught up to the throne of God. The woman flees into the wilderness, and stays there in fear of the dragon for a thousand, two hundred, and threescore (*i.e.*, 1260) days, or, in the quaint notation of Hebrew prophecy, *a time* (one year), *times* (two years), and *half-a-time* (half a year), *i.e.*, three years

and a half. There is war in heaven. Michael and his angels fight with the dragon, the old serpent, "he that is called the Devil, and Satan;" the dragon and his angels are defeated, cast down from heaven to earth. He follows the woman into the wilderness, persecutes her, and makes war against "the remnant of her seed."

This is the Vision and the Wonder; and if we would at all enter into its meaning, we must glance at it from three different points of view.

First, we take the *historical* point of view. St. John wrote the Apocalypse toward the close of the first century, some years after the destruction of Jerusalem. And this vision may be, as some Commentators think it is, a symbolical history of the Divine kingdom upon earth up to the period at which he wrote. The whole human race, like the whole creation, had been groaning and travailing for the birth of the Redeemer, the Desire of all nations. At last He is born. From his very birth He is assailed by the powers of evil; the dragon waits for Him; Herod seeks to slay Him. At the very crisis of the conflict with the powers of evil, when the Jewish and Roman authorities seem about to triumph over Him, He is caught up to the throne of God: delivered by death from death, He ascends into heaven. And the Church, which brought Him forth, is soon persecuted by the evil powers which had set themselves against Him. Thinned by persecution, the love of many waxing cold, the Church of Judea, the mother Church, saw the evil days approaching which Christ had predicted. The Romans invaded Judea, besieged Jerusalem. Warned

by their Master, the Christians fled to Pella, and tarried there—perhaps for three years and a half, but we have no record of the time—till the sacred city was destroyed. Even then the Church's days of persecution were not passed. The dragon still made war on the woman, sending forth a pestilent brood of heresies and corruptions, opposing himself in an endless variety of forms to as many as “kept the commandments of God and had the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

This is one way, and surely a legitimate way, in which we may interpret the symbols of St. John, and approach the meaning of the picture he sets before us :—

The Woman = the Church of God.

The Babe = Jesus Christ.

The Dragon and his angels = the powers of evil which, in the person of Herod and the Pharisees, Pilate and the Romans, made war against Him.

The Assumption of the Babe to the throne of God = the ascension of Jesus into Heaven. And,

The war of the Dragon against the Woman and her seed in the wilderness = the persecution by the evil powers of the Church and her children.

(2) But we must not confine ourselves to this interpretation and reject all others. We must remember that every prophecy has successive fulfilments, each on a larger scale than that which went before it. And, therefore, to this historical we may

add the larger *predictive* interpretation which other Commentators put upon it. And these say: In this scene the Apostle shadows forth, under the symbols and figures characteristic of Hebrew prophecy, the whole future history of the Church. We cannot now indeed recover the minute allusions with which his words abound; but the broad general scope of his meaning is plain. Humanity, the ideal of which is placed before us as a woman clothed with the sun, at last brings forth the Child who is to be the perfect man and to redeem all men to perfection. All the pure and heavenly forces enlist themselves on his side. All the evil forces array themselves against Him. He is caught up to the throne of God; *i.e.*, Christ, for Himself, has triumphed over the forces of evil, and dwells with God in an eternal peace, ruling over all the children of men.

His triumph is to be repeated, age after age, in as many as love and serve Him. But that there may be success there must be struggle, that there may be victory there must be conflict. And hence the followers of Christ are often driven into a pathless wilderness, seeking rest but finding none. Yet even in the wilderness God has "prepared a place" for them, and will "feed" them. They must fight against evil; but the forces of Heaven are on their side; the very earth shall help them: they shall at last overcome "by the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony;" their final utterance shall be a song, a song of triumph,—"Now is come the salvation, and the strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ."

Is not this also a true interpretation of St. John's words? Has not this been the history of the Church generation after generation, age after age, from the moment he wrote down to the present moment? Let us then take both the historical and the predictive interpretations, and say, "Both are good, both are true."

(3) But while we accept both these interpretations, let us also, taking our stand on these, look for one still higher and larger. These are only the historical and predictive interpretations; and, as has been said, the main value of prophecy lies, not in its historical or predictive elements, but in its moral and spiritual elements, in the fact that it sheds the light of Heaven on the events of earth. Now what is the great event of earth and time? It is the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, with all which that event signified and involved. Must not that great event of earth and time have its counterpart, its ideal, in heaven and eternity? Must it not be full of spiritual instruction for us if, besides looking at the Incarnation from an earthly point of view, we can also look at it from the heavenly point of view, and see what it is like in the thought and purpose of God? In this *spiritual* or *ideal* interpretation of St. John's vision lies its main value for us and for the world. This aspect of it therefore we must endeavour to get clearly before our minds.

Now the earthly side of the Nativity is familiar to us all. But *we* conceive of the incarnate life of Jesus much more widely than the men of his own age conceived it. Think how it shaped itself to them. For four thousand years Prophecy had

spoken of Him, gradually converging to a definite centre, bringing its scattered rays to a focus, until it announced that "the Seed of the Woman" was to be of the Hebrew race, of the family of David, and that He would be born in Bethlehem of Judah. When He was born, the Shepherds worshipped Him as the Christ *promised to their fathers*, the Gentile Magi inquired for Him as *the King of the Jews*. Trained in a home Hebrew to the core, He confined his mission to the Hebrew race, and openly professed that He had not come save to the House of Israel. Even to the believers, the Christians of his own age, he seemed a Jew, and a Saviour of the Jews. It cost the Holy Ghost years of labour before the very Apostles could be taught that they were to go out into all the world and proclaim Christ as the Saviour of all men. St. Paul, indeed, although a Hebrew of the Hebrews, very gladly became the Apostle of the Gentiles, and taught that in Christ Jesus there was neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female ; that all became one new man in Him. But, despite the commands of the Holy Ghost and the passionate logic of St. Paul, the first generation of believers held fast to the Jewish conception of the Messiah ; the Hebrew believers deemed themselves more favoured than their Gentile brethren, simply because they were Hebrews, and many of the Gentiles came under the yoke of the Law in the hope that they might thus rise to an equality of privilege with the Hebrews.

Doubtless it was very natural that this local and national conception of Mary the Hebrew mother, and of Jesus the Hebrew babe and man, should be

tenaciously held ; for it was the outgrowth of many centuries. Nor was it possible to avoid *some* such localization of this conception. For if the Eternal Christ was to become man and dwell among us, He must obviously be born in some spot, of some race.

And yet a local conception of Christ is necessarily an imperfect and misleading conception of Him. What the world wanted and wants is not a Jew, but a man ; not the hero and prince of a single race, but the ideal and archetypal man in whom all races may recognize the very perfection of manhood. And St. Paul endeavoured, so to speak, to *delocalize* the conception of Christ, to detach it from all limits of time and space, to set Him forth as the perfect man, the Head and Crown of humanity, the Saviour of all races, the Ruler of all worlds, by the most forcible and impassioned arguments. But men are moved much more readily by imagination than by logic. And, while St. Paul appeals to our reason, St. John appeals to our imagination and heart. Instead of an argument he gives us a picture. When we go to him, and say, "Sir, we would see Jesus as He is," he shews us, not a Hebrew maiden in her cottage at Bethlehem, but a woman clothed with the sun and crowned with stars ; not a babe lying in a manger, but a man-child caught up to the throne of God,—a child, and yet a man, on whose side all the holy forces of the universe are engaged, who strives with and overcomes all the evil powers of heaven and earth, and who will repeat his victory in as many as follow his banner and espouse his cause. It is *the ideal incarnation*, the incarnation as it stood in

the thought and purpose of God, which St. John sets before us ; it is the nativity of the Saviour of all men and of all worlds, not the birth of the King of the Jews. It is the conflict of Christ, the Everlasting Word, with universal evil, not the conflict of Jesus of Nazareth with the wicked Pharisees and Scribes, of which we see the triumphant issue. It is the eternal salvation, the salvation of all races, nay, the salvation which extends through all worlds and systems, which is wrought by the man-child brought forth by the woman who is clothed with the sun, whose feet stand upon the moon, and whose head is crowned with stars. It is the ideal woman bearing the ideal man, not the Jewish mother and the Jewish babe, who are placed before us in this strange but expressive symbolism ; instead of Hebrew Shepherds and Persian Magi, Michael and all angels worship and serve the incarnate God ; the great Dragon and his angels take the place of Herod and the Pharisees ; the death of the Cross shapes itself as an assumption to the Divine throne ; the redemption wrought on Calvary rises and swells to a redemption wrought in the sun for the whole universe, of which the sun is the centre.

This was the form which the great event of time, the incarnation and work of Jesus, took for St. John when he looked down upon it from heaven, and saw it in its ideal beauty and perfection. And as he gazed upon it, the Heavenly Temple echoed with a song which fitly expressed the victorious gladness of his heart, " Now," now at last, " is come the salvation, and the strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ."

And, indeed, this brief exultant psalm very exactly reflects our own emotions, or adapts itself to them, as we consider the incarnation of the Son of God, whether we regard it from its earthly or from its heavenly side.

There were "saviours" before Jesus came to save his people from their sins. Moses is expressly called a saviour by the Voice of Inspiration. And David was a saviour. Nehemiah and Elijah, and Isaiah,—all the wise statesmen and eloquent prophets who helped to save the chosen people from their enemies, or their miseries, or their sins, were, in a most true sense, their saviours.<sup>1</sup> There was, too, a kingdom of God on earth before the kingdom which Jesus came to set up: for the Hebrew nation were God's people, and He was their king. But before Him there was no kingdom so truly heavenly as his, no saviour comparable with Him. All that came before Him were but as stars which a little relieved the gloom of the night; He was the Sun with whom there came a new day. When He took our flesh, bore our sins, reconciled us to the Majesty on high, heaven and earth might well affirm, might well sing,—“Now is come *the* salvation, and *the* kingdom of God.”

But the more we contemplate the salvation wrought by Christ and the Divine kingdom He established on earth, the more conscious we grow of our weakness, of the sins and infirmities which unfit us for a Divine service and blessedness. We say: “It *is* a great salvation, but how shall we ever grasp it and assure ourselves that it is really ours?” We

<sup>1</sup> See Nehemiah ix. 27.

say: "The kingdom of Christ is in very deed a Divine kingdom, a true kingdom of heaven, for it is pure and strong and bountiful as the heaven which bends above the earth and enriches it; but how can we—so polluted, so infirm of will, so inconstant of heart—hope ever to enter and abide in it?" And in such moods as these it is well for us if we too can hear the loud voice from heaven, singing, "Now is come *the strength*," as well as the salvation, "*and the power of his Christ*," as well as the kingdom of God. For what we want is just this,—the strength to lay hold on the salvation, and the power of Christ to draw us into the kingdom of God and to make us meet to abide in it.

Or, again, if we consider the work of Christ on its heavenly side, still heavier demands are made on our faith and hope. For now we have to conceive of Him as the ideal Man in whom all the powers and energies of humanity, masculine and feminine, are gathered up, as the centre, crown, life of the whole human world, with its various races, kingdoms, cultures, civilizations. Nay, we have to conceive of Him as the eternal creative Word, as standing at the source of universal life; as effecting a redemption, not for a single race, nor even for the Church alone, but for the whole creation, for all worlds and all their inhabitants; as conducting all the intelligent creatures of God through darkness into light, through the mysteries of life and death into the still greater mystery of life everlasting, through the seasons and cycles of time into eternity. This universal salvation we confess to be "*the salvation*," this universal kingdom to be "*the kingdom of God*." But *how* can we

rise to a conception so grand, so boundless? how can we believe, or even hope, that a salvation so great has been wrought, when we see the whole creation still groaning in bondage to vanity and corruption, and the races of men still plunged in guilt and misery? We can only rise to it and grasp it as we listen to the loud voice from heaven and believe what as yet we cannot see. In heaven they see the end from the beginning, the goal to which all things round, as well as the devious and obscure course by which they travel. And if *they*, with their wide clear vision, their insight into the counsels of Eternal Wisdom and Love, assure us that Christ sits in the sun, ruling all events; that in Him is not only salvation for all, but *the strength* by which all lay hold on that salvation; that He came, not only to establish the kingdom of God, but to exert *the power* by which all men are drawn into that kingdom,—shall we not listen to them, and believe, and hope, and rejoice? Will it be wise of us to trust eyes so dim as ours rather than their open eyes who see the truth?

O it is an infinite comfort to us, walking here among the shadows, to learn how human fate and destiny, *our* fate and destiny, shape themselves to the gracious spirits who look down on us from the unclouded light! It is an infinite comfort to us, as we advance slowly and sadly on our journey, to pause now and then and listen to the music of their song, and set our feet to the measure of its strain. And it should quicken in us the ardours of an immortal hope for ourselves and for the world that now, as, summoned by the vision of St. John, we

have paused and looked up to heaven, we have seen the Babe, who once lay in a manger, cradled in the sun, and have heard the loud glad voices of the heavenly host pouring over the walls and battlements of the eternal city to greet us with the song, "*Now is come the salvation, and the strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ.*"

S. COX.

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THE FIRST CHAPTER OF  
THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

VERSES 10-14.

NOWHERE in Scripture is there such a grouping of quotations, as in this first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is a remarkable constellation,—all the stars of which are brilliant, while yet they differ from one another in size, and hue, and intensity of lustre. The inter-adjustment is strikingly felicitous. There is a fine combination of demonstration—the logical element, with embellishment—the æsthetical; so that the *tout ensemble* issues, to the appreciative reader, not only in a firm conviction of the intelligence, but also in a lively sentiment of the heart. Not only is theology developed and settled; religion is stimulated. And that is just what always ought to be in the handling of things spiritual and evangelical. It is a very special necessity in these days of wide-spread tendency toward scientific culture.

In the seventh, eighth, and ninth verses of the Chapter the writer shews, contrastively, the very

different styles of representation which the Old Testament writers employ when speaking of angels on the one hand, and of the Messiah on the other. The former are but "winds" and "flames of fire,"— fulfilling the behests of the Almighty in an important, but comparatively humble, sphere of creation. But the latter is far other. He is a King. He is God. His throne is established for ever. His administration is the perfection of wisdom and righteousness. His "joy" over the realized results of his rule, in all places of his vast dominion, is, in its height and depth, measurable only by the depth and height of the boundless complacency of the Infinite Father. So very different are the Old Testament representations of the angels and of the Messiah respectively.

The inspired writer proceeds to say, in verses 10-12:—

*And*

*'Thou in the beginning, O Lord, didst found  
the earth:*

*And the heavens are thy handiworks.*

*They shall perish; but thou shalt endure:*

*And they all, like a garment, shall wax old;*

*And, as a vesture, shalt thou roll them up,  
and they shall be changed.*

*But thou art the same,*

*And thy years shall not come to an end.'*

The *And*, which stands at the head of this quotation, links it on, in a purely generic and indeterminate manner, to what goes before. The reader is left to particularize, to his own mind,

if he should desire it, the definite relation of the citations.

The passage, thus indefinitely appended to the quotation from the 45th Psalm, is likewise taken from the Psalter. It is found in the 25th, 26th, and 27th verses of the 102nd Psalm. But to those Expositors, who have not seized the idea, that, in the fine free-and-easy practical representations of the inspired penman, there is a beautiful blending of embellishment with demonstration, the citation has occasioned the greatest perplexity: and this perplexity has resulted in very violent expedients of exposition.

The difficulty is this:—*There is nothing in the contents of the Psalm to lead us to the conclusion that it is Jesus who is addressed in the cited words.* So far as intrinsic evidence is concerned, there is nothing in the Psalm that is, in any special manner, Messianic. There is reference, indeed, to Jehovah's *mercy*; and that of course, in its antithesis to justice, involves the conception of propitiouness; which propitiouness, in its relation to moral government, involves the idea of propitiation; which propitiation involves the idea of a propitiator. But not only is it by a circuitous process that this reference to Jesus our Saviour has to be reached; the reference, even when reached, scarcely suffices to satisfy the demands of exegesis, if the notion of bare demonstration, without any interblending element of æsthetic embellishment, be insisted on. For, although the idea of a propitiator may, and must, be ultimately involved, wherever there is reference to God's mercy to Zion in particular,

or to his afflicted people in general, still it is only logically involved. And there is no evidence, intrinsic to the Psalm itself, that it is the propitiating Jesus, as distinguished from the propitious or propitiated Jehovah, who is addressed in the words of the citation, and throughout the whole of the Psalm.

Recent expositors of the Psalms and of the Epistle see this clearly, and hence not a few of them, proceeding on the popular conception of the relation of the citation to the Letter-writer's argument, do not hesitate to speak irreverently concerning the relevancy of the logic.

Among these irreverent critics, some,—of high scholarship too, such as Lünemann,<sup>1</sup>—maintain that the Letter-writer was “misled” by the word *Lord*,<sup>2</sup> as occurring in the Septuagint Version of the Psalm. He did not know, they assume, that it stood in that Version to represent the Hebrew *Jehovah*; but he knew well that it was commonly employed by his Christian brethren around him as a designation of our Saviour. Hence his blunder, as they imagine. In his simplicity and ignorance he just took it for granted that it was the *Lord Jesus Christ* of whom the Psalmist sung! It is ‘too bad’! It would be positively shameful, were it not that it is actually ridiculous. For, even supposing,—and we are not disposed to dispute it,—that it was the Septuagint Version alone of which the writer made use, he must, in using it,—provided he had in him any discriminative talent at all,—have noticed that not merely in scores upon scores, but in hundreds on hundreds of instances, the designation is employed

<sup>1</sup> Following in the wake of Böhme and Bleek.

<sup>2</sup> κύριος.

where there is no possibility of either openly or surreptitiously thrusting in a special reference to the Messiah who was to come.

More reverent critics are driven, notwithstanding their reverence, to extremely straining expedients. Some, such as Pierce and Wettstein, suppose that the passage is relevant, not because it speaks of the Messiah, but because it speaks by implication of the angels, when it speaks of the "heavens," and says of them that "they shall perish." "They shall perish," says Pierce, "as to their dominion and authority." "The heavens," says Wettstein, "that is, the angels, the *celestials*."<sup>1</sup>

Others suppose that not one of the quotations, in the entire constellation of passages, is intended to be a proof-text. They are all, it is contended, merely the borrowed garment or garniture of words in which the Letter-writer chooses to express, not the ideas of the Old Testament writers, but his own New Testament conceptions. Of this opinion is von Hofmann.<sup>2</sup>

Others, such as Stier, conceive that the Psalm is strictly Messianic, *although we could never have divined the fact, had it not been for the quotation in the chapter before us*. They imagine that it is the Messiah, who, as the afflicted one, "pours out," in the body of the Psalm, "his complaint before Jehovah," and to whom the Divine Father turns and speaks in the latter half of verse 24, and thence-forward throughout verses 25–28, which include the verses quoted by the Letter-writer. In support of

<sup>1</sup> "οἱ ὄντες, i.e. angelī sive coelites."

<sup>2</sup> "Der Schriftbeweis," i. p. 150.

this interpretation, Stier has to assume a corruption of the Hebrew text of verse 23. Thrupp, again, while admitting that the verses quoted, instead of being addressed *to* the Suppliant, are addressed *by* him, in continuation of his address in the preceding context, supposes nevertheless that, to vindicate the relevancy of the citation, we must assume that the address takes a special turn at the 24th verse, and is there and thenceforward directed to the Messiah, although in the entire preceding part of the Psalm it is directed simply to Jehovah as Jehovah.

The Duke of Manchester, after most elaborate research, came substantially to the same opinion, and made the most of it, indeed far too much.<sup>1</sup> So perplexed was he. The judicial and judicious Lawson honestly admits his perplexity, and says. "How these words agree with the scope of the Apostle, so as to prove Christ to be more excellent than the angels, is difficult to understand."<sup>2</sup>

But there is not the slightest occasion for resorting to straining. The inspired writer has already given his readers abundance of demonstration; and there is floating before his view another demonstrative citation, which he purposed to bring forth before he winds up this preliminary section of his high argument. It is given in the 13th verse. But meanwhile he aesthetically intercalates, so to speak, as truly and strictly applicable to our

<sup>1</sup> See his "Horæ Hebraicæ," pp. 99-110.

<sup>2</sup> See his noble folio, "An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrewes; wherein the Text is cleared, Theopolitica improved, the Socinian Comment examined." 1662.

Lord, the majestic language of the Psalmist in the 102nd Psalm. If he had deemed it requisite to account for the use that he makes of the passage, he might have unfolded his idea in some such manner as the following: *And in truth, since it is the Son, who, as we have seen, is the manifestative effulgence of the Father's glory, and the manifestative impress of the Father's hidden substance; and since consequently it is the Son, who, in manifestation of the Father, acted in the creation of the universe, and still acts in the maintenance of all things by the word of his power; the grand words of the 102nd Psalm are truly and admirably descriptive of his super-angelic glory.* The warrant for the quotation is complete, and all difficulty vanishes when we divest our minds of the stiff artificialities of logic, which we are too apt to bring with us when we come to the unsophisticated representations of Scripture.

*Thou at the beginning, O Lord, didst found the earth.* The expression *at the beginning* is, more literally, *at (the) beginnings*; for not only may we go back in thought, along the unity of creation, to the beginning of the universe: we may also go back, along the lines of the distinct constituent parts of the great whole, and thus get to numerous objective beginnings. The earth began. The sun began. The stars began.

*O Lord:* The inspired writer, not being fettered by artificiality in quotation, inserts, out of his own cornucopia, this vocative. The Lord is really addressed, and Christ is really Lord. He is God, and Jehovah too.

*Didst found the earth:* The earth is æsthetically

regarded as an architectural structure, which needs a very solid foundation on which to rest. The Almighty Builder gives it such a foundation, so that its stability is secured for ages of ages.

*And the heavens are thy handiworks:* This is the companion clause to the preceding. It is a Hebrew ‘parallelism.’ *The heavens:* They are spoken of in their plurality, for, at an exceedingly early period, the idea was reached that there is aloft, over our heads, far more than meets our eyes. Were we to ascend to the star-studded firmament that is visible, we should see another star-studded firmament beyond. And why not more, and yet more, if we should continue still to ascend ?

*Thy handiworks:* The builder of the earth is the constructor of the heavens. There is no antagonistic dualism of creators—one below and terrestrial, the other aloft and celestial.

*They shall perish, but thou shalt remain:* It was a sublime intuition which the Psalmist had into the essential transitoriness of all the constituent parts of the material universe. Change is necessarily going on in earth, sun, moon, and stars. It cannot possibly be avoided where there is motion. Day by day the alteration progresses. Millennium after millennium it advances. The earth is not now what it was millenniums ago. It will not be to-morrow what it was yesterday, or what it is to-day. The sun is radiating itself off, and must by-and-by cease to burn. “It is simply,” says Sir William Thomson, “an incandescent mass cooling.”<sup>1</sup> Stars have already burnt out, or will. The moon no longer, as of yore, burns and

<sup>1</sup> See his “Geological Dynamics,” § 40.

glows. It is now an immense opaque cinder, only reflecting the sunlight that is thrown from afar upon its disc.

*They shall perish : They, that is, the heavens,* although what is affirmed of them is equally true of *the earth*, and might have been affirmed of it by the Psalmist. The figures employed, in the succeeding lines shew that his mind was thinking in particular of the heavens, as distinguished from the earth, and from the universe as a whole.

*But thou shalt remain :* In the majority of critical texts the verb is accentuated as in the present, *thou remainest*.<sup>1</sup> It is better, however, with Pierce, Wettstein, Knapp, Bleek, to accentuate it as future,<sup>2</sup> in harmony with the verb that goes before and the verb that comes after ; in harmony, too, with the so-called future of the original Hebrew. The Vulgate translates it as future.<sup>3</sup> Bengel hesitated between the two accentuations ; but, in his German version, he decided for the future rendering. *Thou shalt remain ; Thou shalt survive ; Thou shalt "continue through,"—through all the ages of destruction and transformation that may elapse.*

*And they all, as a garment, shall wax old :* The writer still thinks of *the heavens*, which were frequently conceived of as some kind of drapery over-canopying the broad earth.

*As a garment shall wax old, and wear out, so as to be no longer serviceable for the purpose for which they are now used.*

*And as a vesture shall thou roll them up, and they shall be changed :* The word rendered *vesture*<sup>4</sup> denotes

<sup>1</sup> διαμένεις.

<sup>2</sup> διαμενεῖς.

<sup>3</sup> permanebis.

<sup>4</sup> περιβόλαιον.

an outer garment for throwing loosely around the person. The writer would be thinking of the Syrian *burnouse*.

*Shalt thou roll them up:* Doubtless the correct reading,<sup>1</sup> though it has been surrendered by Tischendorf in his last edition. It is certainly not a literal translation of the original Hebrew. And more,—it would not, and could not, be the original form of the Septuagint Version. That would no doubt be the reading, which we find in the Alexandrine manuscript of the Old Testament, and in the Sinaitic and Claromontane manuscripts of the New—the reading in which Tischendorf finally settled—*thou shall change them.*<sup>2</sup> The other reading—that represented by the Authorized Version—had crept into some manuscripts of the Septuagint before the time of the Letter-writer. It had been the choice of some transcriber, who, thinking not unlikely of Isa. xxxiv. 4, had either intentionally or unintentionally varied the phrase that lay before him. *Shalt thou roll them up* is, then, the correct reading. When once *the heavens* have ceased to serve their present purpose, they will be dealt with as a robe that is no longer fit for use. Such a robe is often *rolled up* and laid aside, to serve, by-and-by, some other purpose. One particular mode of dealing with cast-off robes is particularized, because the poet is painting concrete pictures, and he leaves it to the common sense of his readers to accept them as only partial representations.

*And they shall be changed:* The poet does not say, *And they shall be annihilated.* With true intuition he could see that, without annihilation, there

<sup>1</sup> ἔλιξεις.

<sup>2</sup> ἀλλάξεις.

would be some new cosmical arrangement. There will be *a new heaven and a new earth*. The very materials of the old may be rehabilitated, though that is an idea that does not enter into the Psalmic representation.

*But thou art the same, and thy years shall not come to an end:* Our Lord is unchangeable in all that is essential to the identity of his being or to the glory of his character. He is “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” *His years shall not come to an end:* they shall not *leave off*,—that is the precise reproduction of the original term.

The halo of glory around the person of our Lord seems to be complete. But the inspired writer lingers as he looks, and adds to it a farther intensification, saying,—*But to which of the angels has he ever said, Sit at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?* The sacred writer recalls himself, as it were, from the profusion of illustration, in which he had been,—to the great delight and profit of his readers,—expatiating with such enthusiasm. And he proceeds to wind up his connected series of quotations with one of peculiar logical potency.

*But:*—It is as if he had said, *But to recur to demonstration, I shall add, out of the fulness at command, yet one more proof-text in support of my position.* Then he proceeds to ask,—*To which of the angels has the Divine Father ever rendered the honour which he conferred on the Son, when he said, Sit thou at my right hand?*

The quotation is made from the first verse of the

110th Psalm, and is no mere embellishing illustration. The Psalm is manifestly Messianic.<sup>1</sup> It must be, if any Old Testament oracle is. Not only is it expressly applied to the Messiah by our Saviour himself (Matt. xxii. 42-45; Mark xii. 35-37; Luke xx. 41-44), it is inapplicable to any other personage. In the New Testament it is quoted, as having reference to our Lord, more frequently than any other passage contained in the entire Old Testament scriptures. The words, moreover, which are cited in the verse before us, *Sit at my right hand*, are the mould of all those numerous New Testament representations of our Lord's exaltation, which depict Him as now enthroned in glory, at the right hand of the Majesty, waiting for "the time of the restitution of all things."

The Psalm is a companion one to the second,—though it is by no means so aesthetically constructed. There is more abruptness and, as it were, brokenness in its contents, and less of literary balance in the relation of part to part. It is, too, still more condensed. It is a Psalm of apophthegms. The jointings, that link them into lyric unity, lie under the surface.

Like the second Psalm, the 110th was doubtless composed by King David, and with his eye reverted to the great promise which had been made to him through Nathan,—the promise that he should have a Son, the throne of whose kingdom would be established for ever (2 Sam. vii.). In the second Psalm he embodied his vision of the universality

<sup>1</sup> See Bergman's admirable and exhaustive Monograph on the Psalm.

of his Son's dominion. No reluctance on the part of kings or peoples could hinder this glorious result. It had been assured; and opposition on the part of the unwilling would but issue in their discomfiture and ruin.

It was doubtless at a later stage of the Psalmist's prophetic development that he composed his 110th Psalm. He still, in vision, anticipated opposition on the part of princes and peoples. But he saw, more clearly than before, the surpassing exaltation of his Son, and the active agency of the Divine Father in working with him and for him, till all opposition should be put down. He also saw, probably for the first time, that his Son was to be more than simply King of kings. He was to be Priest of priests, a great High Priest, a Priest upon his throne, whose great aim it would be to intercede in behalf of the sinful, and to consecrate and sanctify the peoples who were willing to be subject to his rule. It was a glorious vision, the full significance of which would only gradually dawn upon the prophet's mind and upon the minds of subsequent prophets, poets, thinkers, and other inquirers.

*To which of the angels has he ever said, Sit at my right hand?* To none of the angels did God ever thus speak. To none of them could he ever give such an invitation. No one of them was capable, or could ever become capable, of being exalted to such a pre-eminence of glory. Mere creatures cannot be lifted to a level with the Creator. But Jesus is exalted to that level, in virtue of being, in his own personality, even when veiled with humanity, truly divine.

*Until I shall have made thine enemies thy footstool:* A period is indicated by the conjunction *until*: and consequently the likelihood of some important change, then occurring, is sub-indicated. What if it should be fitting, that at the close of the present militant condition of truth and righteousness, there should be a re-appearance of the Exalted One for final judgment and adjustment? When the earth, cleansed through the victories of the Gospel and by the final awards of the Judge and the baptism of fire, is ready to be annexed to heaven, so to speak, what if it should be fitting that its Creator, Sustainer, Restorer, the Lord of lords, and King of kings, should, in his humanity, a terrene thing, descend from his present provisional elevation, and take his place on the throne of his own peculiar glory? (See 1 Cor. xv. 24-28.) But into the lustre of these various divine glories, all of them dazzling with excess of brightness, our eyes cannot discriminatingly penetrate.

*I shall have made thine enemies thy footstool:* Before the ultimate consummation, and the glorious visible presence of the Exalted One, the battle between good and evil must go on. The earth is the chosen arena. And God, though invisible, is present with the hosts that are contending for truth, for righteousness, for purity, for self-denial, for love. He is present, striving along with them, and mightily working in them, and through them. Every victory is his. And by-and-by the infatuated enmity shall be, everywhere, subdued. The madness of the enemies shall be

broken, so that they will fall in absolute prostration, or bow down in unreserved submission, before the feet of Him, whose right it was, and is, and ever will be, to reign supreme.

Such is the glory, present and prospective, of Jesus. It infinitely transcends all the pinnacles of distinction on which it is possible for angels to alight. For—and such is the conclusion of our theme—are *they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall inherit salvation?* They are “all,” without exception, ministrant spirits. Their duties are ever “liturgical,” never lordly or regal. They render the service of lieges to the Lord of the Universe, and are busied on the footstool, while Jesus sits on the throne. Even when charged with their highest behests, they but help, in some minor respects, the disciples of our Lord. They are sent forth to minister ‘*for them;*’ that is, *for their benefit.*<sup>1</sup> They minister ‘*to*’ God. But it is his pleasure that they minister ‘*for*’ the *disciples of his Son.* These disciples are even now “heirs of salvation.” But one after another, as their earthly curriculum is completed, they ascend, doubtless under the convoy of angels, and actually “inherit salvation.” Their everlasting bliss is *glorification* in one respect, and *salvation* in another. It is the state in which, being freed from all actual evil, they enjoy all possible good, as far as their ever-expanding capacity admits. Luther’s rendering of the term *salvation*, here and elsewhere, though not so literal

<sup>1</sup> διά, with the accusative.

as ours, is singularly interesting and delightful: *seligkeit* somewhat corresponding to our *bliss*. Such is the inheritance of the saints. And as the ministerant spirits ascend and descend, fulfilling their mission, there will be joy among them over the joy of "the blessed,"—joy "in the presence of God."—"The good Lord forgive me," says the good Bishop Hall, "for that, amongst my other offences, I have suffered myself so much to forget, as his divine presence, so the presence of his holy angels." ("The Invisible World," Book I. § 3.)

J. MORISON.

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THE EPISTLES TO  
THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.

III.—PERGAMOS. (*Revelation ii. 12-17.*)

IN this instance there seems reason to believe that there is a somewhat closer connection between the outward history of the city and the language in which the Church in that city is described in the Apocalypse than we have found in dealing with the Messages to Ephesus and Smyrna. Something there was which gave it a bad eminence over them and over the other cities that are here grouped with it. More emphatically than any other it was the metropolis and fortress of the powers of evil, the place where "Satan's throne was," and where he himself was thought of, as ruling from that throne, as the strong man armed, resenting and resisting the attack which was now made upon him by One mightier than himself. How it came to be so, that outward history may, in part at least, explain.

It is not necessary to go back to the earlier time when the rock citadel of Mysia, about three miles from the banks of the Caicus, first became celebrated for its worship of the mysterious Cabiri, and then, like other sacred places, became a treasury where kings and chieftains deposited their wealth. It will be enough to remember that after the break-up of the Macedonian monarchy it became the capital of a wealthy kingdom, and Eumenes II. sought to rival the glory of Alexandria by the foundation of a library, in which were stored the chief works of the literature and philosophy of Greece;<sup>1</sup> that it became famous for the worship of the great deities, Zeus, Athene, Dionysos, Apollo, Aphrodite, and, with even a more special devotion, of Æsculapius; that round that last form of idolatry there gathered a great medical school, which was afterwards rendered illustrious by the name of Galen. In this religious character lay its special claim to greatness. It was, as Dean Blakesley has well described it,<sup>2</sup> "a sort of union of a pagan cathedral city, an university town, and a royal residence;" and when, on the death of Attalus III., it passed, by his bequest, to the Roman Republic, and afterwards to the Empire, it retained its old fame, and was described by Pliny as without a rival in the whole province of Asia.

Such a city might well seem to the Apostle to be the head-quarters of that great evil Power against which he and his fellow-believers had gone forth in

<sup>1</sup> It may be interesting to some readers to be reminded that from this library we get the name parchment (*charta Pergamena*), as applied to the special kind of vellum that was manufactured for the transcription of its choicest works.

<sup>2</sup> "Dictionary of the Bible," art. "Pergamos."

the name of Christ to wage an internecine warfare. And if we picture to ourselves some of the peculiarities of the worship which was there prominent, how Æsculapius was honoured with the name of "Preserver," or "Saviour" ( $\Sigmaωτήρ$ ); how in his temple the Æsculapian symbol of the wreathed serpent must have been the most conspicuous object, seeming alike to Jew and Christian to be nothing else but an open adoration of the "great dragon called the Devil and Satan;" how to them the works of healing that were ascribed to the power of the guardian deity of the city would seem to be lying signs and wonders, and the name which he bore a blasphemous assumption of the power of the true Saviour; and even the books which the followers of Æsculapius studied to be of the class of those belonging to the "curious arts," which they held in righteous abhorrence and which the first fervour of faith had led the zealous converts to destroy (Acts xix. 19),—it will not seem strange that such a city should be described, as we find it described here, as the very throne of Satan, even if there had been no special events to indicate that there the powers of evil were working in their utmost malignity. But the context shews that they had thus displayed themselves. In other cities there had been the trial of persecution, but it had not extended beyond scorn, contumely, spoliation, or, at the furthest, imprisonment, and stripes, and exile. Here it had gone further, and Pergamos had witnessed the death of one whom we may well believe to have been the proto-martyr of the Asiatic Churches.

The special intensity of the evils which prevailed

at Pergamos determined, it would seem, the choice of the special attribute claimed by the Lord of the Churches as “ He which hath the sharp sword with two edges.” That sharp sword (the word points, in its literal meaning, to the long sword of the heavy-armed soldier, as distinct from dagger or short sabre) came, it will be remembered, from the mouth, instead of being wielded with the hand, and so answered to the description of the righteous and victorious King given by the prophet (*Isa. xi. 4 ; xlix. 2*), and was the symbolic representation of the imagery which the language of St. Paul must have made familiar, and in which the “sword of the Spirit” was “the word of God” (*Ephes. vi. 17*). As such the two-edged weapon was to do its twofold work. On the one hand it was to smite that it might heal, “piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit,” cutting to the quick, reaching conscience, laying bare the hidden depths of each man’s life. On the other it was also quick and powerful to smite and to destroy; and with it, with the weapon of the Divine Word, the champions of the Truth, and the Captain of the great host of those champions Himself, would win the victory even in that battle-field where the throne of Satan was set up as though he were undisputed lord.

The fact that the Church of Pergamos had witnessed the death of one of its teachers (Antipas) has been already noticed by anticipation: of that faithful martyr we must be content to confess that we knew nothing more than the name. The passing mention of him by Tertullian is obviously drawn from this passage and conveys no information; the longer

narrative of Simeon Metaphrastes is as obviously nothing but a martyrdom written to order in the tenth century. The suggestion made by Hengstenberg that the name is itself symbolical; that it is, as it were, equivalent to *ἀντίκοσμος*, "one who holds his own against every one" (*ἀντὶ-πᾶς*), an "*Athanasius contra Mundum*"; and the still wilder conjecture that under this pseudonym we may recognize the living form of Timotheus, though nothing in what the New Testament records connects him with the Pergamene district, may be dismissed as simply and almost childishly fantastic.<sup>1</sup> The name, like that of the Tetrarch of Galilee, is simply a form of Antipatros, as Lucas is of Lucanus, or Zenas of Zenodorus. And so we must leave the name that thus shines like a star in the firmament of heaven, without knowing more than that he who bore it had in open conflict against the powers of evil witnessed that Christ was the one Healer, Preserver, Saviour, and thus had drawn upon himself the wrath of those who saw their craft endangered, or were roused, apart from motives of interest, to fanatic indignation. It remains only to note that here also the blood of martyrs was the seed of the Church, and was fruitful in a harvest of like noble souls, and that among those who were most conspicuous in the annals of martyrdom in the severer persecutions of the second century were four, at least, who claimed Pergamos as their birthplace. (Euseb. "Hist. Eccl." iv. 15; v. 1.)

The words that follow note what there was of evil in the Church in which there was so much that

<sup>1</sup> It may be well to state that I can see nothing in the faint apology which Archbishop Trench makes for Hengstenberg's hypothesis to modify this conviction.

was conspicuously good: "I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak<sup>1</sup> to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel." On the assumption to which we were led in examining the reference to the Nicolaitanes in the Message to Ephesus, we have here to deal with a distinct form of error. Why the name of Balaam should be the representative of that false doctrine, what was its nature and its practical working, in what relation it stood to the teaching of other parts of the New Testament on the same subject, are all questions of much interest. It will be convenient to deal with the two last first, and to trace the history of the controversy as to *εἰδωλόθυτα*, or "things sacrificed to idols."

Every convert from Heathenism to the faith of Christ would acknowledge that he was bound to abstain from any participation, direct or indirect, in the false worship which he renounced at baptism. But the question what acts involved an indirect participation was one that gave rise to a perplexing casuistry, and yet could not be avoided. Was the convert to go out of the world and turn from all social gatherings but those of his own community? Was he to refuse to join in the public meals at inns or elsewhere, which travel made almost indispensable? If he did so refuse, he cut himself off not only from the pleasures, but from the duties and opportunities, of family and social companionship.

<sup>1</sup> The anomalous dative (*τῷ Βάλακ*), instead of the accusative common after verbs of teaching, which is found in the better MSS., must, I believe, be explained as an instance of the imperfect knowledge of Greek which led to the use of an idiom more or less Hebraic rather than as a deliberate use of the "*dativus commodi*."

Yet if he accepted the invitation, there was the risk that he might be eating of the flesh of sheep or ox which the host had himself sacrificed, as a festive thank-offering, to Zeus or Apollo, or that the wine which he drank might have been poured out as a libation. If he did so eat, was he not, in "eating of the sacrifice," a partaker in the worship, eating the flesh and drinking the cup that belonged to the demons that he had learnt to identify with the gods whom the Heathen worshipped? Yet another case presented itself which followed the convert even to his own home. Of the sacrifices that were offered in Heathen temples the greater part became the perquisite of the priests. When they had more than they could consume themselves they sold it to the meat-dealers of the market. The Christian convert, therefore, could never be sure that what he bought had not been thus offered, and the sensitive conscience was harassed with the tormenting thought of an unknown involuntary transgression, which yet brought with it defilement and condemnation. The Jew might avoid the danger by dealing only, as, for the most part, Jews deal now, with a butcher of his own persuasion; but this implied a more settled and organized society than that of most Christian communities in the early days of the Church's life, and many years would probably pass away before the convert was able to meet with a Christian butcher. On the other hand, in most cases, the Jewish butcher would probably refuse to supply him; or, if that were not the case, would only do so under the restrictions (to the Gentile burdensome and vexatious) of the Mosaic law of clean and unclean meats.

How near the surface the question lay is seen by the fact that it occupied an almost co-ordinate place with that of circumcision, and entered into what then appeared as the great charter of the freedom of the Gentile converts. The decision of the Apostles and Elders in that first Council at Jerusalem was practically of the nature of a compromise. On the one hand, the converts were released from the necessity of circumcision; on the other, by way of make-weight, they were commanded to "abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication" (Acts xv. 20). The grouping of these latter prohibitions was due to the fact that they were popularly recognized as among the precepts of Noah, which were held to be binding upon all his descendants, and were required, therefore, even by the more liberal Rabbis, of all "proselytes of the gate;" while those who aspired to the higher blessedness of the children of Abraham had to qualify themselves as "proselytes of righteousness" by the sacrament of adoption. The decree was, as I have said, received at first with a joyous welcome. But soon new difficulties presented themselves as rising out of the broad general language in which it spoke. Did *any* eating of meat that had been sacrificed to idols, even if unconscious, involve the eater in pollution? Others, at a distance from Jerusalem, Gentile converts, reasoning from broad principles to bold conclusions, might question the obligation of that which seemed to rest on no great principle, but to represent a policy of conciliation and concession. If an idol was "nothing in the world," a powerless block of marble or of

wood, how could it taint the flesh of the victim sacrificed to it, and make the creature of God, in itself good, unfit for human food? Some, waxing yet bolder, seem to have contended that they might even take their place in a public banquet within the precincts of an idol temple, so long as they were not required to join in any formal act of worship. (1 Cor. viii. 10.)

Such was the state of things which St. Paul found at Corinth. There the more scrupulous party, under the influence of Jewish feeling, was obviously the weaker; the bolder were also the stronger, exulting in their knowledge, their rights, their independence. It is remarkable that, in arguing with these latter, St. Paul never makes even the most distant allusion to the decree of the Council of Jerusalem, though he himself had been at least a consenting party to it. For some reason of policy or principle, because the Corinthians would have demurred to the authority of the Council, or from a characteristic love of going to the bottom of a matter, he discusses the questions of casuistry that thus presented themselves on the ground, not of authority, but of the rights of conscience. Sin lay in the will, and therefore an involuntary act done in ignorance was no transgression; and as the act was in its own nature neutral, the man need not be over-anxious to ask questions, the answer to which might involve him in perplexity. Where, on the other hand, the man was, as it were, openly challenged or tempted to partake of the sacrificial food, he was to abstain, yielding up the abstract right, which St. Paul fully recognized, lest he should wound the conscience of

any other less strong-minded than himself. (1 Cor. x. 21.) For a like reason the Apostle, while apparently admitting, for the sake of argument, the abstract possibility of a blameless participation in a banquet, even in the idol temple, first earnestly dissuades men from it, on the ground of its perilous consequences to others; and then, on what more truly expressed his own convictions, as involving a formal recognition of the false worship which the Christian had renounced in his baptism.

I have dwelt at this length on the position occupied by St. Paul in this controversy because it has been maintained by Renan and other recent writers, who see in the different aspects of teaching presented by the writers of the New Testament Epistles not only diversities of gifts, but antagonism of principles, that the strong language of the Apocalypse is intended to be a condemnation of his teaching; that he is, in fact, the Balaam whom St. John seeks to hold up to the abhorrence of the Churches, just as others have identified him with the Simon Magus who appears as "the hero of the romance of heresy" in the strange controversial novel known as "The Clementine Recognitions."<sup>1</sup> It can, I believe, be shewn that this theory is altogether destitute of probability; that the minds of St. Paul and St. John were in this respect in perfect harmony; that even dealing with the Message as coming *from*, and not *to*, the latter Apostle,

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Renan's "St. Paul." "Les chapitres ii. et iii. de l'Apocalypse sont un cri de haine contre Paul et ses amis," p. 367. So assuming that Balaam is translated into Nicolas, "un seducteur païen, qui eut des visions quoique infidele, un homme qui engagéant le peuple à pécher avec filles des païennes, parut le vrai type de Paul," p. 304.

it is such as the former would have accepted and rejoiced in.

And (1) I note that those who are condemned by the Message are precisely those whom St. Paul urges, on grounds of a moral expediency so high that it becomes a duty, to refrain from the exercise of the freedom and the right of which they boasted. It was to be expected that some in their self-will would harden themselves against the appeal ; that they might even use St. Paul's name, and boast that they were more consistent with his principles than he was himself. This, we know, was what Marcion and his followers actually did when they claimed a like liberty for themselves ; and Marcion may well have had forerunners among the Gnostics of the apostolic age. And it would be but natural that those who took this attitude towards one of the restrictions imposed by the Council at Jerusalem should act in like manner towards another, and look at the sin of fornication from the Heathen, and not from the Jewish or the Christian, point of view, as a thing in itself indifferent ; a sensual pleasure, it was true, but not more worthy of blame than that of eating meat that had been offered in sacrifice to idols, or food which the Jewish law prohibited as unclean. The very grouping of the apostolic decree might seem at first sight to favour the view that the prohibitions were of co-ordinate obligation. The earnestness with which St. Paul warns the Corinthians against falling back into the old vicious habits in which they had once indulged with no consciousness of sin, the passing reference (1 Cor. vi. 13) to "meats for the belly and the belly for meats,"

shew how closely the two were connected in his own mind and in the influences that were at work in the Church to which he wrote. The habitual license of the orgies of many Heathen festivals, the prevalence of prostitution in the precincts of many temples, the presence, in that of Aphrodite, of the harlot priestesses who made Corinth infamous, all brought the two evils of which St. Paul wrote into very close combination.

(2) It must be remembered that the strange prominence given to the name of Balaam in the later writings of the New Testament began, not with the real or supposed anti-Pauline teachers, but with that Apostle himself. It was in his warnings to the Corinthians (1 Cor. x. 8) that that dark history of the days when Israel abode in Shittim was first recalled to the memory of the Christian Church : "Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand." Then, as in later days, the two sins had gone together, and the Israelites had both committed whoredom with the daughters of Moab and joined themselves to Baal-peor, and eaten the sacrifices of their gods (Num. xxv. 1-3). When St. Peter<sup>1</sup> then speaks of the false teachers, who had "eyes full of adultery" and "beguiled unstable souls," as following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor (2 Pet. ii. 14, 15); when St. Jude describes those who "corrupt themselves in what they know naturally as brute beasts" as "going greedily after the error of Balaam for reward;"

<sup>1</sup> I assume the genuineness of the second Epistle that bears the name of Peter; but it makes no difference in my argument if it is treated as an instance of pseudonymous authorship.

when St. John records the condemnation of those "that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication," they are not glancing obliquely and with the glance of hate at the teaching of St. Paul, but are actually echoing it.

(3) It may be noted, as accounting for the stronger and more vehement language of the Apocalypse, considered even as a simply human book, that the conditions of the case had altered. Christians and Heathens were no longer dwelling together, as at Corinth, with comparatively slight interruption to their social intercourse, but were divided by a sharp line of demarcation. The eating of things sacrificed to idols was more and more a crucial test, involving a cowardly shrinking from the open confession of a Christian's faith. Disciples who sat at meat in the idol's temple were making merry with those whose hands were red with the blood of their fellow-worshippers and whose lips had uttered blaspheming scoffs against the Holy Name.

And to this teaching, as to the kindred doctrine of the Nicolaitanes,<sup>1</sup> arriving at the same goal by a different path, o'erleaping itself from an overstrained sceticism and falling on the other side, scorning the body, and therefore indifferent to its acts, the Angel of the Church of Pergamos had offered but a feeble and slack resistance. There was no righteous

<sup>1</sup> I have already expressed my dissent from the view that the Nicolaitanes were identical with the followers of Balaam. The view given in the text seems to me the nearest approximation possible to their real relations to each other.

hatred such as won the praise of his Lord for the Angel of the Church of Ephesus. Tolerance of these debasing forms of evil took its place among the "few things" for which he was reproved. And a sharp warning both for himself and for the false teachers followed on the reproof: "*Repent, or else I will come to thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.*" There is, it will be seen, a marked distinction between the two clauses. To the chief pastor of the Church, in his separate personal responsibility for this moral feebleness, the Lord "comes quickly." The words are important as shewing that that "coming quickly" had, in the mind of the Apostle, quite another meaning besides that of the great final Advent. In ways which the man reproved would feel, in the chances and changes of life, in failure and disappointment, in suffering and shame, He would visit the offending pastor who did not repent and rouse himself to a nobler energy from conviction. But with the others he would "make war with the sword of his mouth." There may be in this, as many have thought, a reference to the fact that Balaam the son of Beor was slain with the sword of the children of Israel, which was also the sword of God; but I agree with Alford in thinking that this reference is, to say the least, remote, and that the words receive a sufficient explanation from the imagery of the immediate context. And if, as we have seen, the sword of the Spirit is here also the Word of God,—that which cometh from the mouth of the Lord,—then we may well adopt the interpretation given by Grotius as leading us to the true and spiritual meaning of the

passage. In that warfare the weapons would not be carnal. He, the Lord, would raise up faithful and true prophets, and his word should be in their mouths also as a sharp sword, and they would wield that sword effectively and slay the monstrous forms of error that were warring against the truth.

The promise "to him that overcometh" presents in this case points at once of peculiar difficulty and special interest. The meaning of the "manna" appears, perhaps, at first not far to seek. Those who remember with what fulness St. John, and he alone, records the teaching in which his Master claimed to be the Bread of God, the living bread that came down from heaven, of which, if a man ate, he should live for ever, as contrasted with the manna in the wilderness, which had no power to save from death (John vi. 33, 50), will be ready to admit that the words now before us must have recalled that teaching, and that the manna which was to be the reward of the conqueror was the fruition of the ineffable sweetness of that Divine presence. Those who resisted the temptation to join the idol's feast in the idol's temple should be admitted to that heavenly feast in the eternal temple, which was also the palace of the great King. But the epithet "hidden" suggests more than this. In the current belief of the Jews the sacred treasures of the Temple, which had disappeared when Jerusalem was laid waste by the army of the Chaldeans, had not been allowed to perish. The Prophet Jeremiah had carried them to "the mountain, where Moses climbed up and saw the heritage of God" (2 Macc. ii. 4), *i.e.*, the heights of Pisgah, and there they were kept, no

man knowing of the place, "until the time that God shall gather his people again together and shew them his mercy." It was not strange that the imagination of devout Jews should dwell on that legend, and picture to themselves the restoration, not only of the Shekinah and the Urim and the Thummim, and the ark and the tables of stone, but also of the manna thus hidden. This and the general thought that the hidden and the precious were, for the most part, co-extensive terms (as in Psa. xvii. 14, "Whose bellies thou fillest with thy *hid* treasures"), will explain why the word was chosen to heighten all that was conveyed by the promise of the manna. Whatever men had dreamt of blessedness and joy should be surpassed by the taste of that hidden manna, the gladness of that fellowship with Christ.

The "*white stone, and the new name written on it, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it,*" present difficulties of another kind, chiefly, as by a strange paradox, through the very ease with which they admit of interpretations more or less probable. In the symbolism of colours, which, as having its ultimate root in impressions of pain or pleasure made upon the senses, might almost be called natural, and is, as a matter of fact, all but universal, white, in its brightness and purity, had been associated with joy and gladness, with victory and triumph. So, in a practice which, though originating, it was said, with the half-civilized tribes of Thrace or Scythia, had become general, days of festivity were noted with a white, those of calamity with a black, stone. So, when the vote of an assembly as to the

guilt of an accused person was taken by ballot, white stones were the symbol of an acquittal, black of a condemnation. It has, accordingly, been contended, with at least much plausibility, that this is the significance of the "white stone" in the promise now before us. The conqueror in the great strife with evil, whatever opprobrium he might incur in the sight of men, whatever sentence he might receive at the hands of an earthly judge, would be received as justified and acquitted by the Eternal Judge. Yet, on the other hand, it can scarcely be said that the symbol of a mere acquittal would be an adequate expression of the reward promised to him that overcometh. A verdict of "not guilty," which, on this interpretation, would exhaust the meaning of the promise, could hardly take its place as co-ordinate with the "crown of life," or with "the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

Partly on the ground of this inadequacy, partly on the general principle that the source of the Apocalyptic imagery must be sought, not in the customs of Heathen antiquity, but in the more venerable symbolism of the Jewish ritual, it has been contended by Archbishop Trench, following a German commentator (Zullig), that the "white stone," associated, as it is, with one of the lost treasures of the sanctuary of Israel, must be interpreted as another of those treasures, and be identified accordingly with the Urim and Thummim of the High Priest's vestments, on the assumption that they consisted of one or more stones of translucent and colourless purity, of the nature of diamond or rock crystal. There is so much in this view of these "stones oracular" that

commends itself to me, that it is not without reluctance I am brought to the conviction, as I have elsewhere shewn,<sup>1</sup> that it is not applicable to the passage now before us. Not only were the Urim and Thummim almost or altogether beyond the horizon of the thoughts of the writers of the New Testament so that throughout its pages there is not a single allusion to them, not even where we should have most looked for it, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, unless it be in this obscure and debateable passage; but the word used by St. John is not that which throughout the LXX. and the New Testament is used of precious stones and gems ( $\lambdaιθος$ ), but that which describes the secondary and derived use of stones or pebbles in social or political life ( $\psi\hat{\eta}\phi\sigma$ ). On these grounds it seems to me that there is a strong *prima facie* presumption against Archbishop Trench's view; nor can I admit that it is counterbalanced by the view (which I have shewn, in dealing with the Message to the Church of Smyrna, to be unproven) that all allusions to Heathen usages are outside the circle of Apocalyptic symbolism. On the whole, then, with one important modification, I am disposed to adopt Ewald's view, who sees in the stone, or  $\psi\hat{\eta}\phi\sigma$  of the promise, the *tessera hospitalis*, by which, in virtue of form or characters inscribed on it, he who possessed it could claim from the friend who gave it, at any distance of time, a frank and hearty welcome. What I would suggest, as an addition to this, rises out of the probability, almost the certainty, that some such *tessera*, or ticket—a stone with the name of the guest written on it—was

\* "Dictionary of the Bible," art. "Urim and Thummin."

given to those who were invited to partake, within the precincts of the temple, of the feast that consisted wholly, or in part, of the meat that had been offered as a sacrifice.<sup>1</sup> On this view the second part of the promise is brought into harmony with the first, and is made more directly appropriate: he who had the courage to refuse that *tessera* to the feast that defiled should receive another that would admit him to the supper of the Great King.

This hypothesis gives, it will be seen at once, a fresh vividness to the closing words which speak of the "new name" that was to be written on it. Here we are at once within the circle of familiar prophetic language. The "new name" had been to Isaiah and Jeremiah the formula for expressing the new life of blessedness in store for those to whom it was applied. The land that had been forsaken and abandoned to destruction should be called, "Hephzibah," as once more the delight of her Lord. The daughter of Zion, that had sat desolate as a widow, should be "Beulah," as a bride over whom the bridegroom once more rejoiced (Isa. Ixii. 2-4. Comp. lxv. 15). Jerusalem herself was to be known by the mystic name of the "Lord our Righteousness" (Jer. xxxiii. 16). In his own case and that of his brother, as in that of Simon Barjona—in Peter, the "Rock," and Boanerges, the "Sons of Thunder"—the Apostle had known a new name given which was the symbol of a higher life and a character idealized in its gifts. And so in this case the inner truth

<sup>1</sup> Some such *tesserae*, giving the bearer admission to the theatre of Dionysos at Athens, are, if I remember rightly, to be seen among the Greek antiquities of the British Museum.

that lies below the outward imagery would seem to be that the conqueror, when received at the heavenly feast, should find upon the stone, or *tessera*, that gave him the right of entrance, a "new name," the token of a character transformed and perfected, a name the full significance of which should be known only to him who was conscious of the transformation, just as in the experiences of our human life, "the heart knoweth its own bitterness, and the stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy."

The apparent parallelism of the description in Chap. xix. of Him who "was called Faithful and True," whose "name was called the Word of God," and who yet had besides these "a name written that no man knew but he himself" (xix. 11-13), has led some interpreters to suppose that here also it is the name of the Lord, new, wonderful, mysterious, as expressing some relation between Him and his people which the names as yet revealed do not perfectly embody, that is promised to him that overcometh. A closer study of the parallelism will, however, I believe, confirm the view which has been given above. As the Lord alone knows the name which He bears, so the name written upon the stone given to the conqueror is known only to him that receiveth it. What is this but the expression, in the language of symbolism, of the truth which the writer of the Apocalypse expressed afterwards in language more purely abstract and ideal: "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is"? Only when humanity has become

partaker of the Divine nature will it be able to comprehend the mystery of his being who is at once Divine and human. And yet in that likeness of all the saved to their common Lord there shall be no mere uniformity. There, also, as the manna in the Jewish legends was said to taste to each man like the food in which he most delighted, each soul shall recognize in the work which Christ has done for it that of which none can know the wonder or the sweetness but himself.

E. H. PLUMPTRE.

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*"THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED."*

FEW things are more remarkable or more striking in Biblical criticism than the confidence with which writers of directly opposite opinions express themselves on the authorship of the Fourth Gospel. M. Bouzique, in his History of Christianity, which is now being published in English, says (vol. i. p. 136): "Its dogmatic portion is the work of a Platonizing Christian, not to say a Gnostic, and cannot therefore be set down to the account of any of the Twelve Apostles." The author of "*Supernatural Religion*" has demonstrated to his own satisfaction that it was not written by St. John; nay, he goes even further, for, in his "*Conclusions*," he says: "The author of the Fourth Gospel is unknown, and no impartial critic can assert the historical character of his narrative. Apart from continual minor contradictions throughout all these narratives, it is impossible to reconcile the markedly different representations of the Fourth and of the Synoptic

Gospels" (vol. ii. p. 481).<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, we turn to Alford's "Prolegomena," and read thus (p. 70, fourth edition): "Our conclusion, then, from internal as well as external evidence, must be that the Gospel is what it has generally been believed to be—*the genuine work of the Apostle John.*" And so with other authorities. It would seem from the point of view assumed by either side that it was absolutely and wholly impossible to take any other—that there was actually no evidence but that which either has thought fit to adduce for his own purposes.

That it is possible to make out a very strong case against the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel we do not for a moment deny—the strongest reason being so obvious as to suggest itself to every intelligent child, "Why is it that St. John's Gospel is so different from the rest?"—just as it is easy to make out a very strong case against the integrity of Isaiah, or the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. But the force of the argument in all these cases is mainly derived from an obstinate refusal to sum up and estimate the mass of positive evidence on the other side. There may be negative reasons of great weight against many things that are known to be true; but they can never be sufficient to outweigh the two or three facts of positive evidence on the other side. And though it may not be possible to disprove these facts, it is always possible to ignore them; and, if we would support and advance the opposite opinion, it is indispensable to do so. Now there appears to be

<sup>1</sup> The references are to the first edition of the work.

one fact which, though patent on the face of the Fourth Gospel, has not been commonly estimated at its real importance. And yet it is a fact of which every reader can judge for himself: and this is the indication which the writer appears to intend to give of his own identity. We may surely take it for a truth so certain as to need no proof that the writer of this Gospel, whoever he was, wrote it for the express purpose of being believed, and to that end desired to authenticate his statements.

The conclusion of the twentieth Chapter, which some critics believe to be the true conclusion of the book, and which all critics accept as an integral portion of it, establishes the former, at least, of these positions: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through his name." Is it unfair or uncritical to draw attention to the words, "*in the presence of his disciples*," as justly indicating the character of those now recorded and of their recorder? Is it possible to refer these verses to any one but the author of the book? Is he not here speaking of himself and his work? Does he not clearly intimate that he was himself a disciple of Jesus and an eye-witness of that which he related? And does he not explicitly declare his motive in writing, viz., that men might believe? Does it not therefore make it probable that we may find him in other places drawing particular

attention to the authority of the statements which he made? It seems at least possible that in Chap. i. 14 there may be such a passage: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory," &c. Writers differ as to the way in which they understand this *we*, and therefore we will not press it, but only remark that to ourselves it seems more natural to understand it as spoken, not of Christians or of men generally, but of the special experience which as a *disciple* of Jesus the writer would have.

Again, in Chap. xviii. 15, 16, we are told that "Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple," &c. Here we are introduced to two persons called disciples, that is to say, apparently, apostles, Simon Peter and *another*, who are associated with Jesus at his arraignment before the High Priest. In Chap. xix. 26 the second of these persons appears again, for we can hardly doubt that it is the same, associated with the mother of Jesus — to whose care she is consigned. In the following verse he is called "the disciple," and "that disciple." But here he is further designated as "*the disciple whom Jesus loved*," a title which was applied to him before in Chap. xiii. 23, when he lay on his Master's bosom at the Last Supper. No reasonable critic can for one moment doubt that the person who lay on his Master's bosom, to whose care He consigned his mother, was also the disciple who was known to the High

Priest, and who was associated with Peter when he followed his Master into the palace of the High Priest. All these are certainly incidents such as those which are described by the writer, in the general terms of Chap. xx. 31, as occurring "*in the presence of the disciples.*" Once again, in the twentieth Chapter, we find him associated with Peter in the visit to the sepulchre, when he is called "*the other disciple,*" "*that other disciple,*" and "*the other disciple whom Jesus loved.*" It may therefore be regarded as certain that it is one and the same person all through who is meant. It is also at least probable that there may be some relation between this *disciple* and the *book* of which mention is made in Chap. xx. 30. But up to this point it does not otherwise appear who "*the other disciple*" was, nor who "*that disciple*" was "*whom Jesus loved.*" Had the Gospel stopped at Chap. xx. 31 there would be nothing to shew us this.

There remains one other passage before we pass on to the twenty-first Chapter, and this is Chap. xix. 35, where, of the piercing of Jesus' side, it is said: "And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe." Some understand this to be spoken, not of the writer himself, but of another person, from whom he had received his information. In that case it of course adds nothing to our means of discovering who the writer was. Probably, however, most persons who read the narrative will identify this eye-witness with the writer himself, and will understand him to mean that he was present when the incident referred to occurred, and

saw it with his own eyes. Indeed, it seems impossible to interpret the latter words, "and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe," otherwise than of the writer himself; for why should he *so* authenticate another person's testimony? They correspond moreover with singular accuracy to the other statement in Chap. xx. 31: "But these are written that ye might believe." In both cases the writer is manifestly anxious to assure his readers of the truth of what he wants them to believe. This, also, viz., the piercing of Jesus' side, was one of the things that were done "in the presence of the disciples," or at least of one of them.

But as yet we have not been able to identify with greater precision the particular disciple referred to in the several passages already mentioned. For that we must turn to Chap. xxi. Here, again, the beloved disciple comes before us, and in the 24th verse he is distinctly identified with the writer. It matters not whether the last two verses are or whether the whole of the Chapter is by the same hand as the rest of the book: the attestation at the end, whatever its worth, cannot be intended to apply to that Chapter only, but must be meant to indicate who the beloved disciple already spoken of is. And if that attestation is not by the author, it must certainly be acknowledged as an independent indication of his identity, and, in fact, the only clue we have, and doubtless a very ancient one, to the mystery of the "beloved disciple." And this is the point that we are desirous of urging, namely, the impossibility there is of identifying the disciple whom Jesus loved apart from the Gospel itself.

The author of "Supernatural Religion" says (ii. p. 430): "In none of the Pauline or other Epistles is there any allusion, however distant, to any disciple whom Jesus specially loved. The Apocalypse, which, if any book of the New Testament can be traced to him, must be ascribed to the Apostle Joh 1, makes no claim whatever to such a distinction. In none of the apocryphal Gospels is there the slightest indication of knowledge of the fact; and if we turn to the Fathers even, it is a striking circumstance that there is not a trace of it in any early work, and not the most remote indication of any independent tradition that Jesus distinguished John or any other individual disciple with peculiar friendship." Now, not to mention in passing that He certainly did more than once distinguish *Peter*, *James*, and *John* with marks of peculiar favour, we observe that, if this is true, as it no doubt is, then it is impossible that our knowledge of the beloved disciple can be derived from any other source than from the Gospel itself; and, consequently, we cannot legitimately use the identification of the beloved disciple with St. John as a reason for refusing to believe that the Gospel which bears his name was written by him. It is unfair to say that St. John's Gospel was not written by the beloved disciple, because we do not know who the beloved disciple was except from the Gospel itself. We do not know that the beloved disciple was St. John, or that St. John professed to be the beloved disciple except from this Gospel; and therefore we must not argue about the authorship of it as if the two men were certainly identical. The writer may have been the beloved disciple, and yet that

disciple not St. John; or he may have been St. John, and yet St. John not the beloved disciple. And it is likewise unfair to say that the Fourth Gospel was not written by St. John, because there is nothing outside the Gospel to shew that the beloved disciple was St. John, except that universal ecclesiastical tradition, which is affirmed to be insufficient authority to rest on in a case of this kind. It is surely inconsistent to repudiate altogether such a tradition and yet, at the same time, to accept it so far as to make it the basis of our attack upon the Gospel itself.

If the internal evidence is against the Johannine authorship of the Gospel, by all means let it be given up; but if the only ground for our knowledge of such authorship is supplied by the Gospel itself, let us not reject it as a mere ecclesiastical tradition. To affirm that the evidence is merely external, and on that ground to reject it because it is insufficient, is all very well; but not if the strongest evidence of all, and indeed the only source of our knowledge that the Gospel was written by St. John, is to be found in the framework of the Gospel itself. But that this is the case is no less certain than that the fact of its being so has been commonly overlooked by writers of entirely opposite opinions. Those who believe St. John wrote the Gospel rely chiefly upon the external tradition which has associated it with St. John, supported, as they believe it to be, by subsidiary internal indications; and those who do not believe it appear to be ignorant of the fact that there is more authority supplied by the Gospel itself than even the consensus of tradition can afford. But if

the Gospel, as it is said, is not attested by external tradition as being St. John's, then we can only know it to be so from itself; but those who deny its authorship do not acknowledge *this* testimony, and affirm that internal evidence is against it. Now, of course, a book may be allowed to bear witness against itself; and we may justly say that the Fourth Gospel bears internal evidence of not having been written by the beloved disciple, or of not having been written by St. John, if the evidence tend that way: but if the *only* source of our knowledge that St. John was the beloved disciple is the Gospel itself, we cannot fairly make that knowledge the basis of our attack upon the authorship of the Gospel; because it is investing with too much importance a statement which depends solely upon the authority of the Gospel which we reject. The Gospel may be unauthentic because it is not genuine; but we may not assume its authenticity in a crucial point, in order to disprove its genuineness, and from its genuineness, *so* disproved, deny its authenticity. We certainly may not assume St. John to have been the beloved disciple if there is not external evidence to that effect, and if the evidence of the Gospel itself is not trustworthy. Our knowledge of this identity must either rest upon tradition, or the tradition must have been derived from the Gospel. It is alleged that the Gospel owes all its authority to tradition. We are in a position to prove that the tradition is directly traceable to the Gospel itself. It is quite certain that if the Gospel had ended at Chap. xxi. 23, all would have been desirous to know who the beloved disciple was but no one could have discovered. The next verse, by

whomsoever added, makes it clear that the beloved disciple was the writer. If, therefore, this verse was not added by St. John, or by the writer himself, whoever he was, no complaint can attach to him for having revealed his identity. If it was added by the writer or by St. John, the only conceivable supposition is, that it was added to reveal the identity. But how does it reveal the identity? Only in this way: we learn from it that the writer was the beloved disciple, and that the beloved disciple was *one of the seven* enumerated (xxi. 2). But which of them? It is clear that he cannot have been Peter (verse 20). Neither can he have been Thomas, unless he who is twice designated as Didymus in this Gospel (xi. 16, xxi. 2), is also called "the disciple whom Jesus loved," which is improbable. He must therefore have been one of the remaining five. He may have been Nathanael, "the Israelite without guile" (i. 47); but not unless a twofold appellation is given in the same Gospel to the same man, which is also improbable. He cannot have been James the son of Zebedee, because his early death (Acts xii. 2) is incompatible with any theory of authorship for this Gospel; neither can he have been one of the two who are not named (xxi. 2), because in that case nothing as to identity would be revealed by this apparent revelation. We are, therefore, led to conclude that the writer intended to identify himself with the younger son of Zebedee, as the only one of the seven enumerated (xxi. 2) for whom he can have desired to pass. Thus much, at all events, is certain, that if anything was intended to be disclosed by Chap. xxi. 24, this is all that we can gather from it, while we can only gather it in

this way—the Gospel leaves it for certain that it was written by St. John, or by Nathanael, or by one of two others utterly unknown. It surely does not require any great strain upon probability to eliminate three of these; but if so, the Gospel itself distinctly implies, and shuts us up to its Johannine authorship. When, therefore, we find universal Christian tradition corroborating this conclusion and endorsing it, we are surely not at liberty to dismiss it lightly, nor to argue as if the Gospel itself were silent as to its authorship.

The writer of "Supernatural Religion" says (ii. p. 440): "The peculiarities we are discussing seem to us explicable only upon the supposition that the writer of the Gospel desired that it should be understood to be written by a certain disciple whom Jesus loved, but did not choose distinctly to name him or directly to make such an affirmation." Now, if this really is the case, we may surely ask, Why, then, did he leave upon his work such evidence as this, which is only consistent with the desire to pass for St. John? Granting that we cannot ascertain who the beloved disciple was from tradition or the consensus of external authority, it is obvious, from the Gospel itself that he can only have been St. John—a conclusion which tradition confirms. Before, therefore, we can altogether reject this uniform tradition we must deal with and alter the existing form and substantial framework of the Gospel. Here is a document which comes to us not wholly anonymous, as the other Gospels are (a fact which is frequently alleged to their disparagement), but indirectly, and yet manifestly, professing to be written by one of the imme-

diate disciples and companions of Jesus: are we to reject it *on this ground*? Surely, we must rather make this ground the basis of our examination of the Gospel,—at least, it will be unfair to treat the supposed Johannine authorship of it as a mere ecclesiastical tradition, when the claim to such authorship is one of the permanent and inherent features of it.

We need not here enter into the further evidence of St. John's being the beloved disciple, but content ourselves with observing that, according to the Synoptical Gospels, he was, on three separate occasions, one of those that were chosen to exceptional nearness, and that, in Luke xxii. 8, he is found, as in John xx. 3, xxi. 20, associated alone with Peter. As the result of what has been said, the question really is, whether it is more likely that one of the disciples should write, as he appears to have done in this Gospel, with the design of keeping himself in the background, and yet with the intention of not leaving it uncertain who he was; or whether, in the second century, and late on in it,—for this is the only alternative position that is suggested,—a writer wholly unknown, and so obscure as to have been entirely forgotten, should have written a Gospel such as this, with the only conceivable intention of getting his work to pass for one of apostolic origin; and, in order to accomplish his purpose, should have resorted to such means as these of suggesting his identity, when it is clear that the only fact he had to build upon was the universal tradition, that St. John was the beloved disciple,—a tradition, which it is confessed was derived solely from the (till then non-) existing Gospel of St. John.

STANLEY LEATHES.

## THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

## CHAPTER III. VERSES 8-15.

In the eighth verse a much broader term than that of "bishop" is used to denote a church official. The word *διάκονος*, according to Buttmann,<sup>1</sup> signifies one who runs as a messenger, and hence is a servant or minister, generally retaining an honourable sense. The angels "minister" to the Lord (Mark i. 13; the apostles "ministered" the epistle of Christ (2 Cor. iii. 3). In Acts i. 17, 25, the word *διακονία* is used of the apostolic office, and in xii. 25, of the service rendered by Paul and Barnabas.<sup>2</sup> Only in Phil. i. 1, and in the Pastoral Epistles, is *διάκονος* used of a distinct office, and contrasted with the office of the *επίσκοπος*.

Considerable authorities may be quoted for the supposition that the group of young men, *οἱ νεώτεροι* of Acts v. 6 (*cf.* ver. 10), who performed subordinate duties in the Christian Church at Jerusalem were the prototype of the diaconate.<sup>3</sup> Still, the specific duties which were devolved upon the seven Hellenists differ greatly from the laborious and secular toils of the *Chazan* of the synagogue. The Apostles had, in the first instance, discharged the responsibilities which were devolved upon "the seven." Henceforward they gave themselves to the ministry of the Word. The careers of Stephen and Philip, who were full of the Holy Ghost and prophetic power, shew that the functions of the Seven were somewhat

<sup>1</sup> "Lexilogus," § xl. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Compare also Rom. xiii. 4; xv. 8; Ephes. iii. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Mack, Neander, Vitrunga, Olshausen.

elastic, and capable of great development. The early Church writers generally identify the office of the Seven with those of the deacons of this Epistle and of the Epistle to the Philippians. It is probable that "the helps" of 1 Cor. xii. 28, and the "ministration" referred to in Rom. xii. 7, did not materially differ from the diaconate of the Church at Ephesus. We find from Justin Martyr that the deacons carried the eucharistic elements to the communicants, both present and absent, and that they were entrusted with the privilege of preaching and of administering baptism, and of waiting upon the presbyter or bishop.

We cannot learn much from the injunctions of St. Paul as to their ecclesiastical functions ; but the lesson is obvious, that high moral character was demanded in all who took any part, however humble, in the service of the Church.

Like the presbyters, deacons are to be *worthy of reverence, not double-tongued*, saying one thing to one person and another to another ; *not given up to* (not enslaved by—see Titus ii. 3) *much wine*. There is no material difference between this statement and the counsel by which bishops are warned in the former part of the Chapter. They are not to be *greedy of base gain*, lest they misappropriate any of the funds of the Church ; and then there follows a great injunction—they are to have, or hold, the *mystery of the faith in a pure conscience*. The word "mystery," in classic writers, refers to the politico-religious secrets which were communicated to the initiated. The military oath was said to be the "mystery" of the power of the Romans. It is that which does, or

ought to, withdraw itself from general communication, and which it is sin and folly to disclose. In Biblical usage a mystery frequently connotes a secret concealed from ordinary eyes, but made known by Divine revelation. There were hidden wonders of love and righteousness which had been kept secret, but were now revealed (Rom. xvi. 25; 1 Cor. ii. 7). The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven were made known in the parabolic discourses of our Lord, and "the mystery of the faith" was the recognized form of what was at one time concealed, but is now the inheritance of believers. All who believe in what God has unveiled know the mysteries. The mystery of the faith which deacons are to hold in a pure conscience is the glorious secret with which faith was conversant. They are to hold fast what was once concealed but is now the open secret of the kingdom of God.

The "pure conscience" demands that the mystery should not be changed in essence by the way in which it is held or uttered. It should be "*held*," not subscribed to, merely for the sake of peace, or for "the greater glory of God." It is not to be verbally maintained when reason or heart fail to endorse it, but it is to be "*held*" in an undefiled and vigorous conscience.

*Verse 10.—And let these, moreover,<sup>1</sup> be tried,<sup>2</sup> first by the Church, and then, if no charge be laid against*

<sup>1</sup> See Ellicott's valuable Note on *καὶ—δι*, in which, by giving both particles their full force, an "adjunctive character" emerges out of their coalition.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. art. "Docimasia," in "Smith's Dictionary of Antiquities."

*them, let them act the part of a deacon.* The participle here expresses the condition under which the action of the principal verb takes place.

In *Verse 11* the Apostle diverges for a moment to the moral fitness required in women deacons, or deaconesses. Luther, Huther, Coray, and Bengel, sustain the interpretation, preferred in the English Version, that the Apostle refers to the wives of deacons. Mack, Beza, and Wiesinger supposed that the "wives" of both bishops and deacons were referred to. The objection to these explanations is, that there is neither article nor pronoun limiting the reference, and that the subject of deacons is resumed in the following verse. Ellicott and Fairbairn sustain the older interpretation. The existence, of these female helpers and servants of the Church is undoubted. In *Rom. xvi. 1*, St. Paul refers to Phœbe as a deacon; and possibly Euodias and Syntyche at Philippi belonged to the same class. Pliny speaks of "ancillæ quæ ministræ dicebantur." These *ancillæ* suffered greatly in times of persecution. The Order did not cease to exist in the Western Church until the fifth century, and was continued in the Greek Church till the twelfth: The deaconess vanished into the cloister until partially revived in comparatively modern times. The very Epistle which frowns on certain unfeminine services in the Church, shews that there was work of a high order to be done by Christian women. Those who undertake such service ought to be characterized by that same grace of which St. Paul speaks so much. They should *inspire reverence*,

having the halo of purity and sanctity about them; they are *not* to be *slanderers*. *Sobriety* in all their demeanour is expected; and they are to be *faithful*, *trustworthy*, *in all things*.

In Verse 12 the deacons are required to have the same qualifications as the bishops. *Let them be husbands of one wife, ruling well their children and their own houses.* The reason given is that *those who have discharged the office of a deacon well, obtain for themselves a good degree, and much boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.* Jerome, Erasmus, Heydenreich, Cornelius-a-Lapide, Wettstein, Bengel, all suppose by the “good degree” is meant ecclesiastical promotion.<sup>1</sup> If so, the passage would stand alone, and instead of *καλόν* we should have expected *μείζονα*. Rost and Palm say the word *βαθύς* is equivalent to *βάσις*, the material, the standing place of honour. Theodoret translated it, “higher degree of blessedness in the life to come;” and with him Lange practically agrees. Huther, who discusses it at great length, thinks it refers to the respect paid to such in the Church. Probably when coupled with “much boldness in the faith,” it involves the sound standing-ground of the earnest worker, all the rich consequences of exalted faith, boldness of approach to God and men, free and exulting energy in the higher ranges of the action and life of the Church. Different degrees of reward are often insisted upon in the New Testament. The parables of the Talents and Pounds are full of assurance on this head. The equality

<sup>1</sup> “Gradum ab humilitate diaconiæ ad majora munera in ecclesia.”  
—Bengel.

of the saved is never taught. The first may be last and the last first, but there will be both first and last. Those who are saved are saved according to the measure of their faith and capacity. The sapacity of some will soon be reached and, we trust, expanded.

*Verses 14, 15.*—There is a pause in the detail of instructions given to prayer-leaders, to women professing godliness, to bishops and deacons. The Apostle looks backward over the previous portions of his letter, and bestows a word of counsel upon his personal friend. *These things (i.e., the foregoing directions) I write (I commit to paper), though I hope to come to thee more quickly*<sup>1</sup> (than the tone of my remarks might have led you to expect). He anticipated a brief absence, but many of the topics on which he had enlarged were urgent, and it was more than possible that the hope of revisiting Ephesus might be disappointed. *But if I should delay, (these directions have been written) in order that thou mightest know how to conduct thyself in the house of God.* It is possible, though not necessary, to translate the clause absolutely, *how men should conduct themselves;* and this interpretation is preferred by Huther and some others, on the ground that, if it were limited to Timothy, the broad reference to the functions of the universal Church would be out of place. The Authorized Version, Luther, De Wette, Mack, Ellicott, Lange, Fairbairn, Davidson, and the majority of Expositors, wisely overlook this difficulty, and simply

<sup>1</sup> "Such comparatives often refer to the suppressed feelings of the subject."—*Ellicott.*

see the Apostle's anxiety with reference to the conduct of Timothy in communicating and enforcing the previous injunctions.

The "house of God" is a phrase borrowed from the Old Testament, where it is applied to the Temple (see also Matt. xxi. 13). In the Epistle to the Hebrews (iii. 3-6) it is descriptive of the covenant people themselves. In this house Moses was a servant, Christ was both Son and Lord, "which house are we, if we hold fast the boldness and glorying of our hope stedfast unto the end." Believers<sup>1</sup> are "the dwelling-place of God." The Christians at Corinth are addressed as the "temple of God."<sup>2</sup> So that it is in complete harmony with Pauline usage that this "house of God" should be further defined, *which is, or (to bring out the full force of the ἥπτις) such indeed being, the Church of the living God.* The dwelling-place of God, the house which He fills with his glory, is the assembly of the first-born. That the living God should dwell and walk therein is the ideal of the Christian community. The Holy Ghost promises to do as much for the society which He sanctifies as He does for the individual souls of which it is composed. The sphere of Timothy's activity at Ephesus is representative of the whole of this ideal fellowship. Paul used this grand epithet, "THE LIVING GOD," as an antithesis to the dead gods of Heathendom and the dead abstractions of philosophy.

H. R. REYNOLDS.

<sup>1</sup> Ephes. ii. 22 : κατοικητήριον τοῦ Θεοῦ.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 16 : ναὸς Θεοῦ ἐστε.

*CAPACITY INVOLVES RESPONSIBILITY.*

ST. MATTHEW xi. 15.

It is sometimes said of men of great fertility of mind, or even of great singularity of mind, that they never repeat themselves, never say the same thing twice; or, at least, never say the same thing twice in the same words. And when men say this of any teacher who speaks often and much, they intend it for a compliment, and even for one of the very greatest compliments they can pay him. But is this, after all, the best thing that can be said of a great teacher, or even one of the best? Is it characteristic of those who have spoken on moral or religious themes most wisely and with the most impassioned earnestness? On the contrary, when men are possessed by any great truth, or series of truths, they are for ever harping on them, for ever repeating them,—repeating them in new forms, no doubt, in new connections, with new illustrations, but yet often falling back on forms of thought and modes of expression which they have used before. It is, indeed, by iterating and reiterating the truths which they hold to be of prime importance that they succeed in impressing them on the public mind, and win consideration for them, if not acceptance. In how many forms, for example, and yet how often in the same forms, does Carlyle preach the sacredness of labour, bid men do the duty that lies nearest to them, and assure them that “blessedness,” not “happiness,” is their being’s end and aim! St. Paul, again, constantly insisted on what he held to be the cardinal truths of the Christian system, often repeat-

ing both his theological arguments and his moral injunctions in similar, or identical, words. Now, assuredly, St. Paul did not repeat himself out of indolence, or because of the poverty of his intellect, or because he did not love to push out the lines of thought beyond the limits to which he had already carried them. No man, I suppose, ever had a more ardent and audacious, a more fertile and original, mind, or better loved to use it to the full stretch of its powers. It may be conjectured with much probability, indeed, that he never shewed a more genuine and difficult courtesy than when he said to the Philippians, "To write the same things to you, to me indeed *is not grievous*, and for you it is safe." But for his kindly consideration for their weakness and need, I apprehend he would have found it very "*grievous*" to go on saying "*the same things*" to them time after time. It was only because he cared more to make them "*safe*" than to indulge his own bent, that he was willing to repeat *the same things over and over again.*

But, more, the very highest Example of all is on the side of repetition. Of the Lord Jesus Himself it would be impossible to say, what is often said as a compliment of inferior teachers, that He never said *the same thing again in the same words*. That He repeated Himself, in the sense of iterating and reiterating certain great truths in ever new and varied forms, every one will admit. Such truths as that we ought to trust in the Providence of God and not to fret ourselves about to-morrow, or that "*the love of God is more than all our sins*," or that faith is the only avenue by which we can reach and appropriate

spiritual realities, were of the very staple of his ministry, and recur again and again—in prayer, in parable, in conversation, in set discourse. But, beyond this, He not infrequently fell back on the very words He had used before. Certain phrases grew to be habitual with Him. He repeated them again and again. And these phrases are more numerous than is commonly imagined. It is no part of my present purpose to trace many of them through the several occasions on which they were used. Some of them will be familiar to every student of the Word, as, for instance, these and such as these:—"There are first that shall be last, and last that shall be first;" and, again, "He that will be greatest among you, let him serve." For the present let us be content with tracing out the history and meaning of a less familiar and, apparently, a far less important and significant repetition.

"*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,*" is said to have been a formula in common use among the Jews; and, certainly, it sounds like one of the dark Rabbinical sayings,—seeming to mean little, yet intended to convey much. But whether He took it from the Rabbis, or whether He gave it to them, unquestionably our Lord repeated it many times. It was first used by Him when He assured his disciples that the old prophecy of the coming of Elijah to prepare the way of the Lord had been fulfilled in the advent and ministry of John the Baptist.<sup>1</sup> He used it again as He closed his first great parable, that of the Sower who went forth to sow.<sup>2</sup> He used it once more when He had been

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew xi. 10-15.

<sup>2</sup> St. Matthew xiii. 9; St. Mark iv. 9; St. Luke viii. 8.

speaking of the salt wherewith every one must be salted, and asked, "But if the salt has lost its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?"<sup>1</sup> Even these three instances would suffice to shew that in these words we have a phrase which commended itself to our Lord, which He used again and again, repeating it probably on many occasions of which we have no record. But what is very curious, and shews how habitually this phrase was on his lips, is the singular fact that He uses it when He speaks from heaven as well as when He stood on the earth. After his ascension into heaven He sent seven Epistles, by his servant John, to the seven Churches of Asia, in which He at once commended and reproved them; and each of these seven Epistles closes with words which are virtually a repetition of the phrase we have already found in the Gospels.<sup>2</sup> No less than seven times we read, "*If he that hath an ear to hear, let him hear* what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Ten times in all, then, this phrase occurs in the brief limits of the New Testament; and always as from the lips of Christ.

Now, obviously, it is much to be desired that we should have a clear conception of the significance of a phrase so often repeated in a Book in which space is so valuable. Obviously, too, it is reasonable to expect that a phrase so often repeated, and repeated by the Great Teacher, will have a special worth. Nor is it unreasonable, I think, to assume that it will have a special worth *in itself*, and not simply as calling studious attention to other sayings of great value and importance. No doubt it subserves that

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke xiv. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Revelation ii. 7, 11, 17, 29; and iii. 6, 13, 22.

function ; it does call special attention to the sayings which precede it, and imply that these sayings have an exceptional value. It *was* a great fact, a fact, too, which many doubted or disputed, that the ancient prophecy of the coming of Elijah had been fulfilled in the ministry of John the Baptist ; for, as Elijah was to come in order to prepare the way of the Lord, this fact implied that the Lord Himself was now among men : and, therefore, when He said, “If ye will receive it, this is Elijah who was to come,” Christ might well call attention to these pregnant and momentous words by adding, “*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*” So, again, the parable of the Sower, plain as its meaning may be to us, was felt to be very difficult by the disciples ; they were conscious of a spiritual meaning in it which their undisciplined endeavours failed to grasp, and had to ask their Master to “declare” it to them : and, therefore, because He knew the parable was hard for them to understand, while yet it much importured them to understand it, He might well call their special attention to it by his closing words, “*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*” So, once more, when He likened his doctrine to salt, and hinted that if we hold the truth in unrighteousness, we may corrupt the very salt of life, He uttered a parable the full meaning of which probably no man has grasped even yet, and might well call our attention to words so “dark with excess of light” by adding, “*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*” So, finally, the Epistles to the seven Churches of Asia contained matter of the gravest importance at least to those Churches, and involve truths which

we all find it difficult to discover and appropriate: and, therefore, our Lord might well call *their* special attention to them, and *ours*, by appending to them the words, "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*"

We may regard this phrase, then, as a mark of emphasis, as summoning studious attention to words of special moment or difficulty. In some old English books passages of singular importance or beauty are indicated by the figure of a hand stamped on the margin of the page on which they are printed; and we may perhaps take this phrase as intended to fulfil a similar function in the pages of the New Testament. It is like a hand in the margin, pointing to passages which we must on no account pass by. But even in a mere mark of emphasis, if at least it be used by Christ, we should look for some intrinsic beauty and worth. And though we admit the profound significance, or even the exceptional worth, of the passages to which this phrase calls our thoughts, we can hardly be content with the conclusion that it has no other function or worth than that of calling our attention to them. A phrase so often repeated by the Great Teacher, so habitual to his lips, must, one should think, have a value, and a special value, of its own. What is its value, then? What does it mean, or imply? What general, important, and helpful truth does it convey,—what such truth as we naturally expect to find in words habitual to our Saviour's lips?

The truth I find in it is this,—*that capacity involves responsibility, spiritual capacity spiritual responsibility.* What a man can do, that he ought to do.

If he *can* hear, let him hear : yes, and if he can see, let him see ; if he can serve, let him serve ; if he can pray, let him pray ; or, as St. Paul expresses the same truth, “Having these gifts (*χαρίσματα*) differing according to the grace (*τὴν χάριν*) that is bestowed upon us, if it be prophecy, let us prophecy according to the proportion of the faith, or if serving, let us be diligent in our serving ; or he that teacheth, in his teaching ; or he that exhorteth, in his exhortation ; he that giveth, let him give with simplicity ; he that ruleth, let him rule with earnestness ; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.”<sup>1</sup> By his habitual use of this phrase our Lord exhorts men to a diligent and faithful employment of their spiritual faculties, powers, opportunities, gifts ;—so, at least, I interpret his use of it.

And if this be its true meaning, is it not a worthy meaning,—a meaning congruous and appropriate to the lips that uttered it ? What was our Lord’s very mission on earth ? for *what* was He sent but to awaken men to a sense of their spiritual subjection, and to call them to a resolute use of their powers and his gifts, that they might thus rise into spiritual life and vigour and freedom ? If, then, we have hit on the true meaning of this phrase, we must confess that it is a worthy meaning ; we shall no longer wonder that it so often fell from his gracious lips who came to lift men to the full use and the full enjoyment of their spiritual capacities and powers.

But *is* this its true meaning ? Let us examine the phrase and see.

When we first look at it, it seems a mere truism,

<sup>1</sup> Romans xii. 6–8.

so simple and trite does it appear. "If a man can hear, let him hear!" we say: "Why, of course men can hear, nay, must hear, whatever is spoken audibly to them." But no sooner do we begin to think, than we see that *that* is not true, that it is not true even on the lowest plane of experience. On the contrary, it is quite true that men *can* hear much that they do not hear. An average ear, we are told, is able to recognize about a thousand musical tones. Speaking roughly, the human ear is so constructed that all tones, from that which is caused by fifty vibrations in a second to that which is caused by five thousand vibrations in a second, can be distinctly received and discriminated. It is a wide range; but both above it and below it there are sounds inaudible to us, though very probably many of them are audible to some of "the inferior creatures." We stand, in short, amidst a vast complexity of sounds, many of which we are incapable of receiving, many more of which only the trained ear can receive (it is computed, for instance, that in the compass of a single octave a trained violinist can distinguish four times as many distinct tones as his untrained neighbours): and even of those sounds which we can all hear, we miss many for want of attention, while we miss the full significance of many more for want of knowledge. How much we lose, for example, in walking through a wood, if we are ignorant of the notes of the various birds we hear around us; how much the scene gains in interest and charm when we have learned to recognize them and can call up a picture of the birds in their several haunts. Nay, how many more distinct tones we hear in the sweet general babble of

the woods if we are able to recognize the several notes of which it is composed. If it be true that "the eye sees only what it brings the power of seeing," it is equally true that the ear hears only what it brings the power of hearing. The capacity of hearing is a common gift; but this common gift becomes special and valuable to us in proportion as we exercise and cultivate it. We all have ears; but we have not all of us ears to hear this or that with: and, even if we have, we do not always use them.

Let us take still another illustration—rising a little in the scale. If we listen to the music of any great master, such as Mendelssohn, or Weber, or Beethoven, we may not all of us be really charmed or impressed by it; the music may be too severe in form, too classical, for our untrained taste, although, in deference to the fashion of the time, we may be tempted to say, and even to think, that we like it. If we do honestly like it, if we are charmed by the veins of melody we find in it, and impressed by a dim sense of a poetic meaning and grandeur in it, yet how different are the sensations of an accomplished and scientific musician as *he* listens to it and sees the master's plan unfold before him, as he traces out the sequence of thought and emotion in it, and responds to a thousand touches of beauty which, in our ignorance, we wholly pass by.

Consider still another illustration. If we listen to a sermon from a preacher who has a profound acquaintance with Holy Writ, who is also familiar with the best literature of his age, and whose heart glows with a fervent love for God and man, we all hear the same words, and may all gather the general

drift of what he says. Yet unless we are of an equal brain with him, and of an equal culture and an equal devotion, how much—yes, and how much of what is best in it—we lose of his discourse! Some of us, because we have not his large and intimate knowledge of the Bible, fail to see how many of his sentences are based upon passages of Scripture or throw light upon them. Others of us, because we lack his culture, fail to catch half his allusions to the great writers on whom he has unconsciously formed himself; the very words he uses have not half the pleasant or instructive associations for us with which they are fraught for him. And still others of us, because we are not of a devout heart, or chance to be in an indocile and indevout mood, miss a thousand delicate indications of the spiritual purpose and intensity by which he is swayed.

In many different ways, then, we are like the idol of whom the prophet averred, "Ears have they, but they hear not." Through our ignorance, or our pre-occupation, or our lack of attention, or our imperfect sympathies, we are insensible to the meaning and charm of many of the sounds which fall upon our ears; we fail to hear, or to understand, many of the voices that address us: we lose much pleasure—and that of the purest, and much instruction—and that of the highest sort, which would inevitably come to us had our capacity of hearing been trained and developed. Above all, and worst of all, since here loss is most impoverishing, we miss the *spiritual* message and burden with which, for the spiritual ear, all things are fraught. Remember what lovely and pathetic parables our Lord was for ever *hearing*, as well as

speaking, when He dwelt among us. For Him the whole realm of Nature was instinct with spiritual significance, and all the relations, occupations, and events of human life. For Him they had voices, and voices that disclosed their inmost secret. The birds of the air spoke to Him, and the lilies of the fields, and the sower going forth to sow, and the housewife sweeping her floor or making her bread, and the very children as they played and wrangled in the market-place. What a world *that* was through which *He* moved ; with what sweet and delicate voices it greeted Him ; what tender and lovely stories they were always telling Him ; what spiritual messages and consolations and encouragements and hopes they were for ever bringing Him ! It is the very same world through which we move ; yet what a dull and voiceless world it often is to us : how little it has to say to us : and, if we may judge by the tenour of our lives, what a poor and sordid message it often brings us ! To many of us the upshot of all the voices of this great fair world seems to be,—“ Toil to-day, and fret about to-morrow ; ” or, “ Take pleasure without enjoyment ; ” or, “ Eat, and drink, and die ; ” or, “ Make money and get on.” Alas, to many of us, how poor and base *are* all the uses of this world !

Have the world and human life, then, changed their voice, or their message, since Christ came and went ? Nay : because He came into the world, and has never really left the world, because He took our nature on Him and still wears it, the world and human life speak the more clearly to us, the more movingly, the more hopefully. The fault is in us, not in them, if we do not hear and apprehend their

meaning. It was because He had ears to hear, and used them, that all things spake so musically, so spiritually, to Him. It is because we have not ears to hear, or do not use them, that we do not take, or do not fully and always take, their meaning, but mistake it. Only as we use and cultivate our faculty of spiritual hearing shall we ever catch, and rightly interpret, the voices which spake to Him by day and by night. He, then, that hath ears to hear, let him hear what God saith to us all, through the whole round of Nature and of human life.

But let him also hear "what the Spirit saith unto the churches." For there are voices in the Bible and in the spiritual experiences of humanity which as yet we have not heard, or have heard only in part and from afar. So many voices address us, we live amid such a din of confused utterances, and we are so preoccupied with the daily vocation which makes a constant and imperative demand upon us, that, unless we are on our guard, the highest and most spiritual utterances will escape us. Many a man pleads, not wholly without reason : "I am so busy, so engrossed with labour and care ; so many capacities in me are undeveloped, so many voices solicit my attention, and these voices are so contradictory and confused : how can I help it if I miss much that is said ? how am I to tell which of these capacities I am to develop, to which of these contradictory voices I am to listen ?" But the answer is plain, unmistakeable. "Listen first to the highest voices. Study first to develop and train your highest faculties. Your spiritual nature, since that is confessedly highest, since that alone is capable of an eternal life, demands

your first care. Give your first and best attention to that. Sacrifice whatever would prevent you from cultivating it, for such loss is gain indeed."

And if any man accept this solution of the problem, which surely is a reasonable one, and the only reasonable one, he knows well enough where to turn. If any man would "hear what the Spirit saith to the churches," he must come to the Church; he must study the Book of the Church; he must take part in the services and ordinances of the Church. In the Bible he will find a great complex world of truth, quick with spiritual voices and influences which will address themselves to his spiritual needs. In the exercises of Christian worship, in sympathy and co-operation with other members of the Christian family, in the labours of a life grounded on spiritual motives, and moving on to spiritual ends, he will receive the very training he needs. Through these the Spirit will speak *to him*, and will quicken in him the hearing ear and the thoughtful meditative heart. Under this gracious culture his spiritual faculties will unfold and "put on strength" until they dominate his whole nature, and mould to their own likeness the whole circle and tenour of his life. On these, in fact, the familiar and habitual exhortation of our Lord will have taken effect, and, by the grace of Christ, he will be roused to a diligent and loyal use of his spiritual faculties and gifts.

"He that hath ears to hear," then, "let him hear;" and, that he may hear, let him remember that his very capacity for hearing binds him to use and cultivate it.

CARPUS.

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